Metalsmith

Winter 1995 Volume 15
Number 1
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Daniel Jocz
Blue Circle, (Protos Series),
1992
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polymer clay, pigment,
2 x 1 x 3/8"
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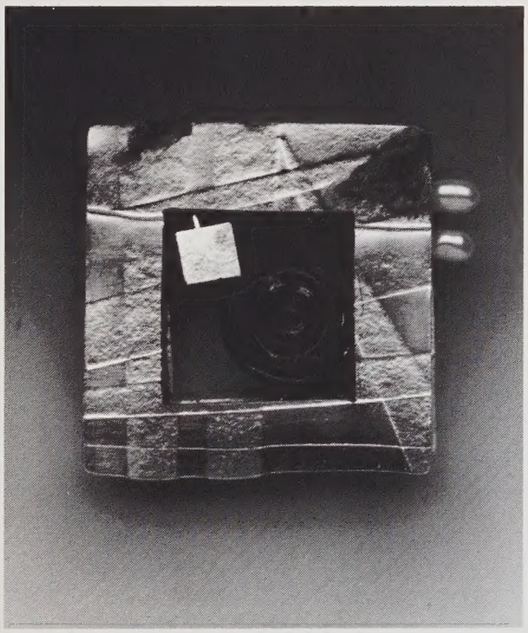

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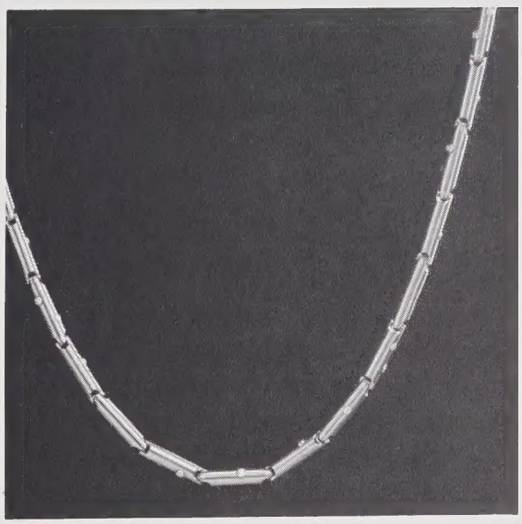

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Abrasha, Necklace; Stainless Steel, 18K Gold, Diamonds

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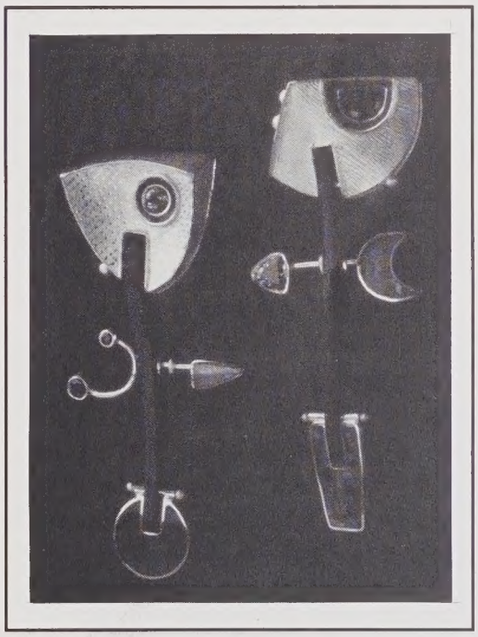

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Editorial

Around my house it has become something of a crime to throw away those plastic rings that come off of the caps of gallon milk jugs. It seems that these bits of flotsam are used by adolescents to make bracelets. I suspect, though the sullen taciturnity of a young teenager keeps me from affirming my suspicions, that these objects are also traded and given among special friends, signifying I know not what, nor am I sure that I even wish to ask.

Surely the use of such found objects has nothing to do with any kind of commentary on post consumer waste, nor does it mark a need to collect the detritus of a life lived. And growing up in a household that has more than its share of artworks made from collage and found materials I am also sure that my daughter is not engaged in some kind of subversive art making challenging her parents preoccupation with high culture and materialistic conspicuous consumption.

It is refreshing to me, a person who has spent the better part of a life analyzing the meanings of materials and processes, to witness what seems to be simply the urge to create, to make something merely to give it existence. I am not so surprised that such things happen, I have always suspected and felt that to be the case but I am surprised that such an action ultimately seems both so simple and so universal. Its a bit un-nerving to see the theories and ideas which I have taken so long to develop come up against such non-theoretical motivations. Are these bracelets made from plastic milk jug rings really no different from the offerings of a freshly killed mouse which the family cat occasionally leaves on the bed as a gift of allegiance and affection? To collect, combine, manipulate, decorate, and exchange objects seems so elemental, yet artists and critics alike have come to imbue such actions with so much importance. Sometimes it see ms that we have developed allegiances, cliques, secrets, jargon, and techniques, that govern such atavistic actions simply to make those actions exclusive. Have we, in fact, so over determined the aesthetics and meanings of the products we create, that we are no longer able to view them as simply a part of our nature.

And just to complicate matters, I have also received requests to look for particular colors of milk jug tops. Where did this aesthetic interest come from? Fragments of overheard conversations lead me to believe that there is an established color symbolism in operation. Did this symbolism develop concurrently with the creation of the bracelets or was it a later refinement? Questions directed at the source of these requests receive only sighs, rolled eyes, furtive giggles, and the explanation that I would not understand. (Imagine my frustration at the realization that after more than 20 years of schooling
I am unable to understand the workings of a thirteen year old mind.)

I guess that the common response would be to say that this proves we should not talk or write about jewelry and the motivations for making it, yet while I can often admire my teenagers enthusiasm and apparently mindless enjoyment of the immediate moment, I still cannot help but believe that after thirty more years of life I must have something more to offer than enthusiasm. And while I am not quite ready to turn the pages of *Metalsmith* over to a social and aesthetic analysis of plastic milk jug jewelry I believe that an investigation into and a discussion of the impetus of such phenomena is part of what the magazine should be doing. We can certainly promote the field and showcase its practitioners, but without intelligent discussion and analysis of our production, whether that production results in objects of silver and gold or objects of fimo and plastic, the results of our activities, despite the labor and skill involved, remain little more than milk jug bracelets.

Now, the important question: Does anyone know where I can find some turquoise milk jug tops?

FCL

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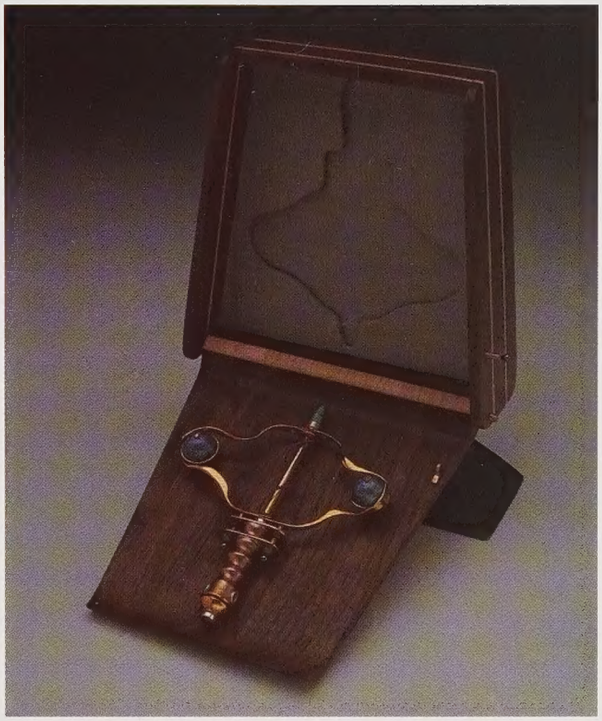

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Ramona Solberg
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9 x 7"; see page 24

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Letters

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Matthew Hollern's review of my work in the Spring '94 issue of *Metalsmith*. Matthew Hollern refers to my larger works as ornamental small sculpture. These pieces are not sculpture but functional hollowware, specifically scent bottles. The functional quality of my work is central to its content and by neglecting to mention this, a large part of the work's content is missed.

These scent bottles, inspired by forms found in the rain forest are meant to hold the scent of the jungle. The organic forms relate to the sensuality, femininity, and mystery characteristic of scent bottles. When the stopper is removed from the bottle, hidden forms of the stopper are revealed as a surprise. This interaction creates an important relationship with the viewer.

As an artist, I welcome constructive criticism and appreciate some of Matthew Hollern's thoughts. However, his remarks about my craftsmanship were offensive. I strive for and achieve a high level of craftsmanship in all of my work. Hollern referred to two pieces as having disruptive seams. The top seam on several seed pods was left open in the place where new floral growth emerges. This was a design decision, not a flaw in craftsmanship.

Metalsmith is an important form of communication within the metalsmithing community. It is an invaluable resource for finding out about exhibitions that we cannot attend. The value of this resource depends on reviewers thoroughly investigating the work they review and making an attempt to understand the vision of the creator.

– Sue Amendolara

Dear Editor,

Re:Book Review of *Hydraulic Die Forming* in Summer '94 *Metalsmith*

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer.
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;....
Alexander Pope, 1688-1744

It was my impression that the purpose of a book review was to review the book for content, structure, ability to convey the subject matter to the reader in a meaningful way, format, etc. It appears that Matthew Hollern chose to focus on a non-existent business relationship that he created in his own mind between Susan Kingsley and Lee Marshall of Bonny Doon Engineering, Inc.

It seems to me that the reason that Susan chose to feature the products available from Bonny Doon is because there is nobody providing anything of a similar nature to the community. When you are trying to present the cutting edge of a technology, by necessity you are forced to use what is out there by whoever is providing it. In this case, it is me.

Bonny Doon Engineering, Inc. is a fully independent corporation with *no business ties* of any sort to anyone in the metalsmithing community, To suggest otherwise leads down an avenue that I doubt Matthew would care to pursue. I imagine that Susan Kingsley would say the same about herself.

Two articles have been written about Hydraulic Die Forming with both of them showing how to build your own press (*Goldsmith Journal*, Dec, 1977 – Marc Paisen and *Metalsmith*, Summer 1985 – Susan Kingsley). Neither once of these articles, nor the book that provided updated drawings, suggested purchasing and modifying inexpensive hydraulic shop presses for three very simple reasons, *safety, economy* and *size.*

Safety:
The usual 20 ton press available from the discount houses (I wasn't aware that they advertised on QVC, or that Matthew was such an aficionado of such trash) is not designed to withstand the forces generated by the full twenty tons of pressure without permanently bending the frame. As the frame bends, a flat surface is no longer presented to the work and if tooling is not bolted in place, it may come flying out of the press with possibly lethal force. The arbor plates provided with the presses are poor quality cast iron and can shatter under load.

Economy:
There is no inexpensive method to make these presses fully useful to the metalsmith. By the time a method has been devised for bolting on tooling and stiffening the frame, the inexpensive press is no longer such a bargain. It is reminiscent of the person who is up to their armpits in alligators, when their reason for being out there was to drain the swamp! Those artists who have access to University maintenance or machine shop personnel to modify equipment for them at no cost are in a unique position as the taxpayer is supporting part of their operating expenses,

Size:
While I realize that Matthew is a member of the "ivory tower" and derives his income from his assistant professorship and probably has an enormous studio/work space supplied to him at no cost by the Cleveland Institute of Arts, his situation does not represent the mainstream of the metalsmithing community who make their living from their art. Space is at a premium in most studios that I have visited and these inexpensive shop presses are BIG. Space costs money and once again, here is a fallacy about what is true cost versus perceived cost.

Finally, bouquets to Susan for providing to everyone the information and techniques that she has developed and honed for more than ten years of getting her fingernails dirty and providing a clear, concise, well-lighted pathway that makes everyone's travels easier.

– Lee Marshall

continued on page 12

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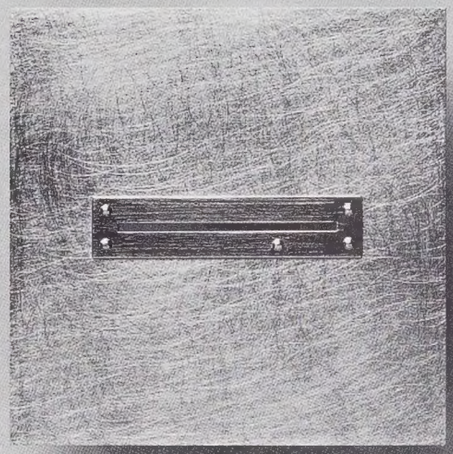

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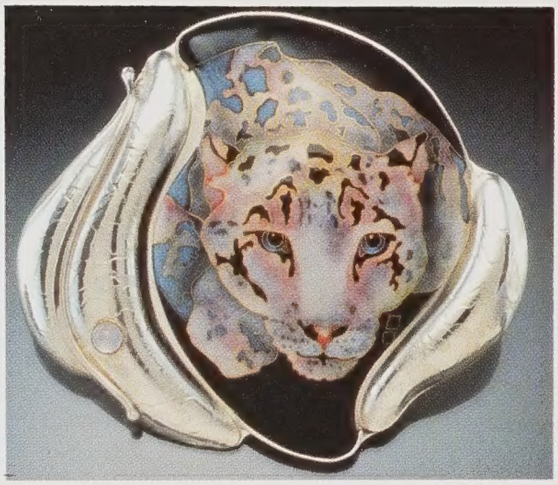

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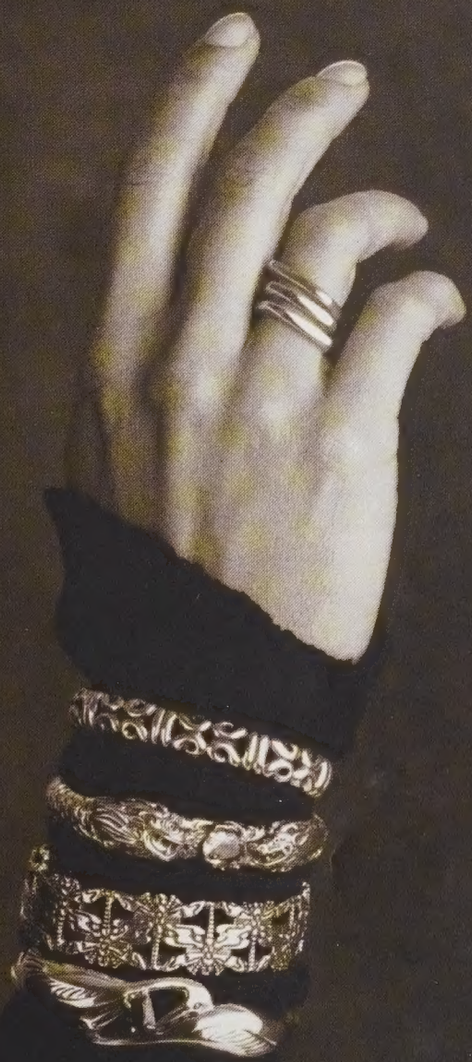

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Recent Sightings

by Bruce Metcalf

The Big Middle

I recently helped jury SNAG's first Exhibition-in-Print. We reviewed more than 600 entries;. In those more than 3000 slides, I presume the jury saw a reasonably accurate "snapshot" of North American jewelry and metalsmithing at this moment. Although the picture was not complete, it sure was broad.

Jurying so many entries one quickly gets an idea of the standard design devices in current usage. These elements define a broad middle, where many of the objects look very much alike. Obviously, none of this work was included in the *Exhibition-in-Print.* Nonetheless, I took note of those standard devices, to provide a catalog of overworked clichés that any jeweler or designer who is interested in distinguishing herself from the crowd should studiously avoid - or quote only from an ironic distance.

#1: and still champion: very flat constructions that treat metal as if it was cardboard. One of metal's most intriguing characteristics is that it is malleable, and thus can be molded into an infinite range of three-dimensional shapes. That's the great potential of hammer work. Metal can be *formed.* With the hydraulic press, it can even be formed cheaply in thousands of units. When metal takes on form, light and shadow play across the surface, and it takes on an unmistakable (and seductive) dimensionality. The cardboard mentality seems to grow from a desire to simply make *stuff* quickly. The standard solution is to laminate several layers on top of each other, usually as a number of graphic bits floating on a geometric background. Either this approach must be very popular with the buying public, or perhaps it's a manifestation of laziness: easy design married to undemanding craftsmanship.

#2: roll-printing, fusing, and clumsy reticulation as surface texture. The roll-printed screen texture is still very much with us. Texture has replaced polished metal as the default finish for mid-level handmade jewelry, all kinds of torch textures are showing up, too. In many cases, crusty surfaces seem to signify the archaic and the "primitive", as if bogus artifacts were somehow more authentic than jewelry with polished surfaces. Perhaps these jewelers should take a look at German jewelry from the 50's and 60's, to see how texture can be used artfully.

#3: shapes and motifs that hundreds of people use: A). simple forged spirals stuck on other forms; B). flat onglette and shield shapes, both horizontal and vertical; C). big-link chains of squares, triangles, spirals, and zigzags; and D). fish as primal symbols (replacing doggies). Use any one of these and you're almost guaranteed mediocrity.

#4: bullet cabachons as pendants. Twenty years ago the tall bullet cabachon was big news. It's not anymore.

Related to #4, there's #5: stones determining design. As stone dealers offer more and more exotic shapes, jewelers try to accommodate their designs to their stock of gems. The problem is that the complex shapes of these stones so dominate the design, that the metalwork appears almost extraneous to the gems. Of course, there's a long history of jewelry designed around great stones, but nowadays it seems that the gem cutters are the designers, and some jewelers are satisfied to construct pretty settings.

#6: a neo-primitive style profoundly influenced by Carolyn Morris Bach, usually consisting of frames of wire posing as sticks lashed together. Actually, Carol Kumata probably did this first in the late 70's, but now it's degenerated into bad neo-primitivism.

It's curious how preciousness has come to be equated with complexity over the past decade. The smooth unity of Scandinavian-modern taste is absent from the American jewelry sensibility. Now, people apparently want lots of detail and texture, as if to *prove* that their jewelry was actually made by hand. Lots of granulation, appliqué, and unsubtle textures are deployed for precisely this effect. Occasionally, as in the work of Vicki Eisenfeld and Judy Onofrio, over-the-top excessiveness works just fine, but this overabundance usually verges on being disorganized and just plain tasteless.

One fortunate omission from my list: fashionable techniques were absent. For most of the past two decades, one new process after another swept across the American jewelry-metals scene. Electroforming, photo-etching, mokume-gane, coloring titanium and niobium, anodizing aluminum each become the technique-of-the-year, and each is then superseded by a newer fad. Luckily, those fashions seem to have died out, and I can't point to any single overused technique this year.

My judgment in this column presupposes that innovation is more valuable than imitation. This assumption can be debated, and, in fact, I would not claim that innovation is necessary in every context. (For instance, there must be a place in craft for mastery of traditional forms.) Nonetheless, the place for imitation is at the middle and the bottom. Those artists and craftspeople who want to gain acceptance inthe middle of the marketplace by making jewelry that looks like everybody else's may want to employ lots of these clichés. But both the artworld and the marketplace demand invention: a continuous supply of the new. Artists and designers who invent distinctive attitudes, techniques, and styles are the ones who succeed. It can be tough at first, because people are often slow to respond to innovation. But in the long run, those who refuse to use clichés and easy solutions get their due. They eventually sell their work at higher prices, or in greater volume, or to a more demanding audience. Using the standard solutions might get you to the middle, but no farther.

Bruce Metcalf works, writes, and teaches occasionally in Philadelphia.

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Letters *continued*

Dear Editor,

My name is David Shelton; I have operated a small blanking die making and part punching business for the last eight years, serving jewelers and metalsmiths across the US. I have also written an article about making such dies that was published in the Winter 1993, *Metalsmith.* I have taught two die-making workshops at Boony Doon Engineering in Santa Cruz, CA, and I assisted Susan Kingsley with the chapter about blanking dies for her book *Hydraulic Die Forming for the Jewelers and Metalsmiths*, which was reviewed by Matthew Hollern in the Summer 1994 issue of *Metalsmith.*

Having read the review, I feel compelled to defend Susan Kingsley's promotion of Boony Doon's equipment and press. If there were numerous soucrces for hydraulic forming accessories, and one were being singled out for promotion, I could see some cause for concern. However, it appears that there *is* only one source for such accessories, which is Lee Marshall's Boony Doon.

That being the case, I think S. K. is doing craftspeople a favor, saving them a lot of time and trouble, by "pitching [these] products".

If you could find everything on your shopping list at one store, why would you waste time shopping around all over town for things other stores probably don't even have? And if Lee doesn't have it, he just might make it for you. So, what on the surface may seem like favoritism, turns out to be, simply, a factual assesment of the accessibilitiy and availibility of the technology.

As far as presses, of course, there are many options available and good results can be had with home modified versions. However, there are very good and specific reasons for recommending the B. D. press. I've spent the last eight years in the trenches, working and experimenting with different presses I've made, including a B. D. clone, so I feel qualified to form a meaningful opinion on the matter.

Primarily, the type of modifications required for adapting a hydraulic shop press to blanking or forming are not something the average jeweler is inclined, or equipped, or qualified to perform. Having the work done at a machine shop isn't necessarily a perfect solution either, because it can easily raise the total cost of a system to higher than that of a B. D. press. I've also heard that some inexpensive shop press frames are not actually built to withstand the tonnage output of their jacks, and therefore can bend or break. Also having talked with hundreds of people, I've found that a good deal of them simply don't want to mess around at all, and want a press that's ready to go. To me, a press that's well engineered, compact, easily adapted for blanking or forming, and comes ready to use, is certainly more desirable than trying to save a few bucks, and possibly failing, doing it myself. I'm not saying it's for everyone, but I've learned the hard way that the B. D. press has many advantages.

Having been "in on the act", so to speak, I became aware of the highly significant collaborative effort of Susan Kingsley and Lee Marshall in manifesting die forming technologies. In my opinion hydraulic forming represents a giant leap for the craft, and can only commend them both for doing a fine job of bringing it out into the open.

– David Shelton

And in a follow-up letter David Shelton continued:

Dear Editor,

This concerns my first letter to you a while back about the review of Susan Kingsley's book *Hydraulic Die Forming for Jewelers and Metalsmiths.*

I want to set the record straight, as much as I am able, about sources for hydraulic presses and/or accessories.

To my knowledge, there are only three places to buy a press that's *ready to use for blanking* A) Bonny Doon B) Rio Grande (screwpress) and C) (which I failed to remember when writing you the first time) *Barbara McCartin* in N. Sutton, New Hampshire. Whether or not Susan K. knows about B.C. I don't know. Whether or not B. C.'s press is readily adaptable to forming work I don't know either.

So for blanking and forming, it still looks as though Bonny Doon is the only "complete" source, and the only thing resembling it. I'm not counting Rio Grande's 100 ton, $25,000 hydraulic forming press, because its out of the league of most individuals.

I'm sure these seem like minor details to you, but it's my two cents worth.

– David Shelton

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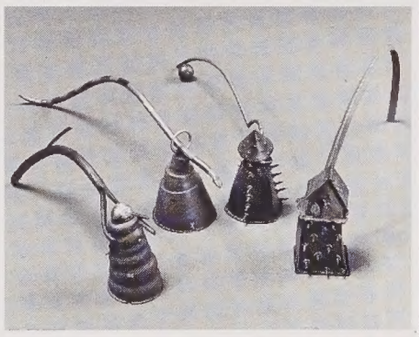

Marilyn da Silva, "Put Out the Fire IV-VII" copper sterling, gesso, colored pencil, steel Photo: Philip Cohen

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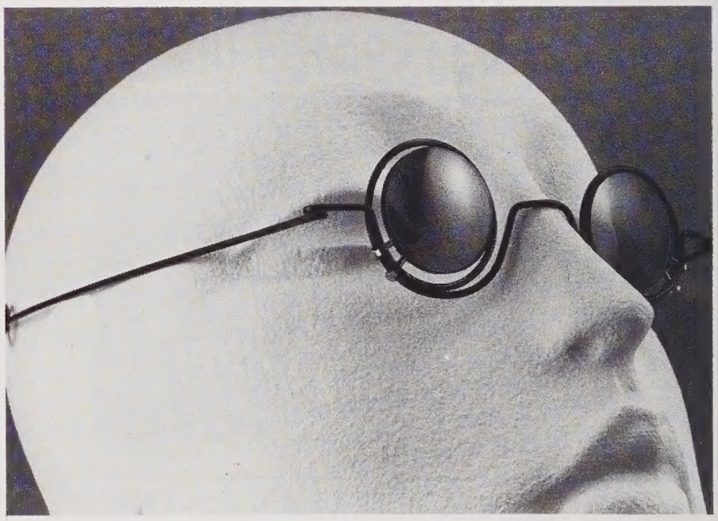

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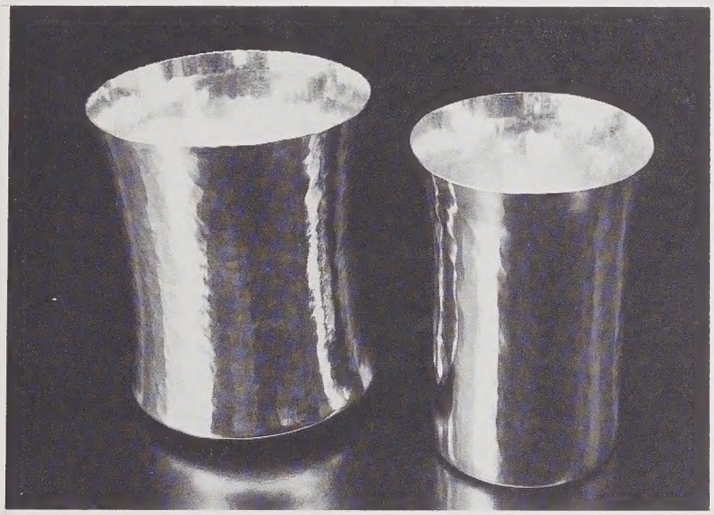
CORTONA, ITALY 1995



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The Museum, Metals, and Collecting for the Future

An Interview with Ken Trapp

by Mija Riedel

"I don't believe any curator who collects in Contemporary Art doesn't think of icons. I couldn't have assembled this collection without thinking, 'When the history of American jewelry is written, I can see these pieces in it."

"I keep coming back to Robert's necklace. It was very, very affordable. The more I look at it, the more elegant it becomes. I'm intrigued by his emphasis on circles throughout, spots of red as color. There are wonderful, unifying themes – not just the rings but within the rings there are buttons, other circular elements, wonderful found objects that look like glass, quartz, pop tops, keys. It has a musical quality. There's nothing precious about it, but there's a lighthearted, lyrical quality that really looks as though it's more appropriate for a spiritual ceremony – I can see it being worn by a priest or priestess – so that you could hear it. Our cultural view of materials gets in the way of our appreciation of art. These are throw aways, to me that's one thing that makes it so wonderful."

Robert Ebendorf
Trinket Necklace, 1992
abalone, button, dice, key, bead, key ring

Ken Trapp is the Curator of Decorative Arts at The Oakland Museum in Oakland, California. In his ten years with the museum, he has witnessed the arrivals – and departures – of four Museum Directors, and three Chief Curators of Art; "we've had more museum directors in ten years than some institutions have had in over a century." Relentless budget cuts have honed his quick wit and active curatorial stance.

An outspoken advocate for contemporary jewelry, Trapp is actively developing the Museum's collection; most recently he curated "Jewels and Gems: Collecting California Jewelry" – an exhibition of more than one hundred pieces of jewelry made by thirty-nine California artists over the last fifty years – in Oakland through January, 1995. Among the several projects on which he is currently working are "The Weight of Gold: 150 Objects Commemorating the Sesquicentennial of the California Gold Rush"; and "On this Special Occasion: Presentation Metal in California".

MR: *What role does jewelry play in the Oakland Museum collection? How has it developed over the years and what inspired you to recently add 54 new pieces to the collection?*

KT: I don't think of the jewelry collection as being more significant than the ceramic or furniture collections. Let me be honest: there's *no way* we could have added 54 pieces of furniture to the collection, or even ceramics. The jewelry ranged from $110 up to several thousand dollars. We got a lot for the money, which was one reason we did it.

I saw an opportunity to develop the jewelry collection and decided the institution had better put its money where its mouth was, that it was time to develop the collection systematically – at least to add artists who weren't even represented. We had no Helen Shirks. Our representation of Arline Fisch was 3 pieces – I mean, she's an internationally known figure, so is Helen, so is Colette... I could go on and name other artists. It was an attempt to retrieve histories.

And – why *not* jewelry? (Laughs) Why do we find it hard to recognize jewelry as a legitimate art form? Because it's worn or presumed to be worn, it carries with it all this weight – the weight that historically it has presumed status, wealth, and position. One of the questions throughout the history of ornament is, "Does the ornament wear the person or does the person wear the ornament?" We do have to be careful there, but we get so bogged down in trivial matters that we deny ourselves the wondrousness of living. I love to have all sorts of things around me that speak of, quite literally, a textured life, from books to wonderful examples of pottery. All of these things enhance us and add to our visual delight. I was taken with the visual delight – the feasting – that these objects offer.

The Oakland Museum focuses only on the state of California – its Art, History, and Natural Sciences. Here in the art department we focus on visual arts, defining a California artist as someone who has made a body of work within the state. The down side in representing a state as we do is that the work is only as good as the work done in the state; I, as a curator, can't make work better.

MR: *Given the ongoing financial predicament plaguing so many museums today, it seems miraculous you were able to accomplish this. How were you able to raise enough interest and capital to do it?*

KT: I guess it was my track record – the administration trusted me – and we had some money. You'll see that the name "The Estate of Marjorie Eaton" proliferates throughout the exhibition. She was an actress, art collector, artist herself who had given the museum some works of art through her estate with the understanding that they would be sold, and those monies would go back into acquisitions – not to salaries, not to operations – so here, it's feast or famine. Our home is a cardboard box and we're eating caviar. (Laughter). It's really bizarre, but it's also part and parcel of working in non-profits.

"It doesn't get better than this D.X. Ross piece *Stone Age Hollywood.* It is a sumptuous use of materials - I love it – a wonderful combination of color and textures. It heads towards refinement but she stops short and brings you back to a Stone Age quality with the use of the rivets, the metals and coil on the ends, giving it some guts."

My colleagues around the country can't believe what we did. They are just absolutely mind boggled that we were able to acquire so many pieces in seven months.

MR: *54 pieces?*

KT: I think it's up to 55 now. It started out slowly – we bought the earrings and scepter clasp and pendant from Kent Raible. I'd been tracking his work for a long time and – well, let me back up even more. One of the reasons we were able to do this is that we were under the gun to get the Margaret De Patta collection out on view. It's a major collection, we should have had it on view – we should be proud of it. I was pounding the doors of the administrators, saying, "You've got to do this, you have a moral obligation." I had to fight and fight and fight. *Really.* It was mouths flying, telephone calls. That's the only way this was going to happen – you have to *make trouble.* We are an institution crisis ridden and crisis driven; the squeaky wheel is heard. People don't belive that. People believe if I'm nice, I'll get what I want. Nooo.

MR: *Why is this such a unique occurrence; why are no other museums in the country able, or interested, in following suit?*

KT: Several of my colleagues say, "My institution wouldn't even collect the stuff." Also, the money we spent – which was a very, very, very reasonable amount – did not have to pass through laborious board decisions.

Now, it's as frustrating on one hand as it is invigorating and liberating on the other hand. My colleagues are not just thinking, "How wonderful and free you are!" They're also thinking, "What a quirky place? Would I want to work in a place like that?" You see, I did something that most of them would be terrified of doing. Try and imagine my Decorative Arts colleagues being given a lump sum of money and told, "No-one will put any restrictions on you – buy what you want." Then you've got to make decisions and the decisions can be wrong; they can also be right. There are a lot of people who hide behind, "We don't have much money, we can't do it." By not having money you don't have to make decisions, and if you don't make decisions there's no risk taking.

I wrote Barbara Gibbs a letter when she accepted the position of Director at the Cincinnati Art Museum, to congratulate her but also to say, 'There are three reasons you might want to consider collecting in Contemporary Craft: it's usually affordable; two, it's overlooked and it presents exciting possibilities; and three, in the future you're going to look back and say, "Why didn't we do this when we had the chance?"' Collecting contemporary is always risk-taking. Institutions don't like to take risks.

D.X. Ross
Stone Age Hollywood, brooch, 1989
sterling, gold, opal, amber, varicite, 4¾ x 2½"

One of the things that recently struck me is that if we started to do surveys of exhibitions in museums over the last 25 years to see what museums have considered important it probably would be extremely revealing – revealing politically, commercially, and culturally.

One of the things we do as Americans, perhaps more than other people, is we tend to categorize and catalogue, to put people and ideas and things into neat little packages. We don't like mess, we don't like the gray area. Here you come along with an area (jewelry) that is not neatly categorized. In Cincinnati, jewelry was subsumed within the Costumes and Textiles division. I think in L.A. it's the same. For some people, jewelry is an accessory to Costume.

Here we're saying we don't have a Costume collection, jewelry is considered a Craft, an Artistic Craft, a Fine Craft – whatever you want to call it – but it's considered worthy of purpose, worthy of study, of value – enough so that we would expend money to maintain and develop it. People aren't used to seeing jewelry in a museum context. Unlike a costume/textile exhibition where you see a mannequin – and what you're really looking at is an Empire gown in which the mannequin happens to be wearing some drop earrings or a necklace – all of these pieces, [here] artificially shown as they are, tell you right away, "I'm a piece of jewelry." There's no mistaking this exhibition for anything other than what it is.

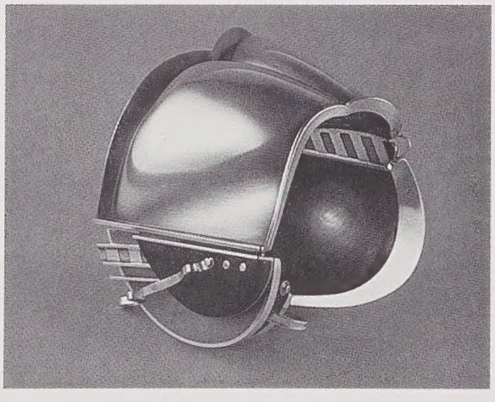
"When I unwrapped Helen's bracelet, that was a thrilling moment. This is the gutsiest piece – it has a wonderful, solid, massive quality. Its mechanicals work gorgeously. It's a delight to touch; it's very erotic, ripe, voluptuous – those curved forms! – yet all these words don't seem to be in harmony with the others. How can we be mechanical and gutsy and ripe – she has it all together."

Another reason jewelry may have a problem is that, when I look at craft, I'm struck by macho posturing that comes out of clay in the fifties and sixties – the Peter Voulkos, Jerry Rothman, John Mason type – "I'm a he-man". Glass, the same thing, "I can blow an eight hundred pound bubble," and somehow it's like, "I'm Godzilla of the northwest." But you come forth with Ebendorf's tinkly necklace made of found rings and dice and so forth, it's like, "What kind of a man are you?" One's masculinity is drawn into question.

One of the curators here said our exhibition schedule was held hostage by testosterone, and I believe it. Think about our exhibitions over the last five years...we've had a shark show, we have a baseball show now, there are hot rods coming up, urban violence....I now refer to our schedule as "The Gonad Series" and "The Wuss Series". Here we are in our department and I'm coming up with all these wuss exhibitions – jewelry, china painting....That's the truth though – the comments that we get, the way people view it. My job is to take that stereotype and show you it's a stereotype. My job as a curator is not to make an artist's reputation, to validate. I'm not trying to validate jewelry – I think it's validated already. What I'm trying to do is bring it to public exposure, to let people know, "Yes, we consider it a work of art." I don't care if you don't consider it a work of art. I don't care. (Laughter.)

It was a rare, rare occurrence for the Oakland Museum to actually have some money that it could put forth and I have to say that I'm very proud of this institution, that we didn't just whine and beg, we stepped forward, we said, "Yes!" There were no deals cut, the transactions were clean and we paid the asking price.

Helen Shirk
Untitled, bracelet, 1978
silver, gold, copper, acrylic
2½ x 3 2½"
Collection of the Oakland Museum



MR: *What are the primary impediments deterring other museums from building significant jewelry collections?*

KT: One is that they probably don't have it to begin with. Institutions are looking, now, not to add collecting possibilities but to reduce collecting possibilities. Two is that – you know, this amazes me – we're nearing the end of the twentieth century and we're *still* beating the same old dead horses: we're still talking about validating a work of art, about seriousness of purpose, about materiality over conception.

Last fall I was in Hawaii giving a lecture; I threw it out because it constantly kept running into this art versus craft debate, and me saying this bores me is no help, either. We need an outside arbitrator to help us because the art camp and the craft camp are so entrenched in their views that they'll never meet and talk. It is like a nasty marriage breaking up.

How did we reach such a cultural impasse? I think we aren't asking the right questions. When did these divisions start historically? We're not just talking about craft that's not painting – painting itself is based on rigid hierarchies within our culture, landscape being pretty low but still life being the lowest, portraiture, historical painting going by the way side. We're carrying around a lot of historical baggage.

Look at it through language – how loaded and coded our language is. How do we assign value to a work of art? What are the reasons jewelry is not accorded more cultural value than it is? I had a number of people who were misguidedly thinking contemporary jewelry must be incredibly expensive – they were thinking Cartier and Van Cleef & Arpels. Cultural value is also monetary value. Historical, cultural, monetary value... rather than dismissing this, why not look at it? When did this whole debate start? What was the Arts and Crafts movement about? There are questions I'd like to ask, but our answers are going to be rooted in philosophy and language, in other disciplines that can help us see ourselves, and quite frankly, I'm not *interested* in reaching resolution because it's not resolvable. That's why I say it's like a marriage that's broken down – irreconcilable differences, irretrievable hurts.

MR: *Would you comment on the observation that there is a lot of jewelry being made, but little of it is of interest conceptually, aesthetically or technically?*

KT: I was really quite disappointed in a lot of the slides and pieces that came to us – I sent a number of them back. There were times I was thinking, "Your technique couldn't match your conception." Another phenomenon I've noticed recently is artists who grow timid. You can see they start out with what seems to be a wonderful conception. Then suddenly, what should have been a monumental sculpture becomes this tiny little thing. If you're going to make clunky jewelry, make *clunky* jewelry – don't go half way. If you commit yourself to a course, complete it. Be bold. Be assertive.

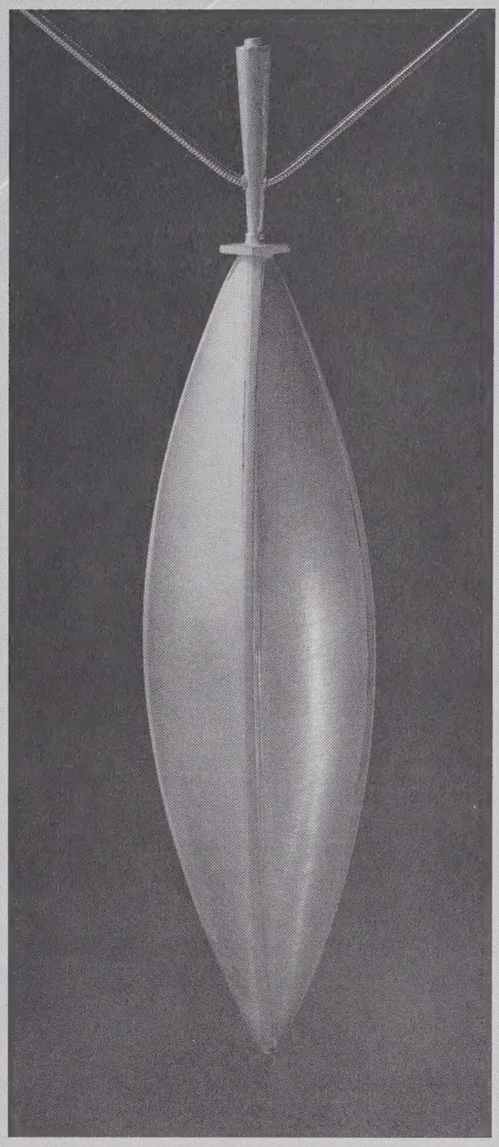
Other work struck me as, "So what?" – and this, for me, is the kiss of death for a work of art. Others looked like things that came from some overpriced, kitschy tourist trap in Carmel.

I've often thought, "How can I help?" and I'll tell you, I'm hesitant because a lot of people can't take criticism. Robert Hughes discusses this in *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America* – that the awful legacy of the sixties is emotion. We don't have discourse anymore, we have gut spilling: "I am the artist, dealing with my emotions, and how dare you even try to judge my emotions?" while I'm thinking, "I'm not trying to judge your emotions; can't we get back to standards?" There are standards by which the world's great poetry has been deemed great poetry. It's been filtered through centuries of expertise. The same with the visual arts – if you are anything more than a hack, let's see some background, some thought, some sensitivity, some questioning.

Another one of the things I would like to investigate in all of this is terminology. One reason we're having a terrible time is because there are too many levels of "Jewelry". If you're making baubles that are to be sold cheaply at a store in Sausalito, we call that jewelry. If you're a gem cutter but you're working for Van Cleef or Harry Winston, that's another form of jewelry making. "Jewelry" is like "Painting" – it doesn't tell you much anymore. We're talking about someone who supposedly has something to say and is using jewelry as a medium for expression.

MR: *I'd like to ask you one of the questions you posed to panelists at the symposium: have you found jewelry makers in particular lack the ability to talk about their work and their craft with any compelling articulation? Is there a correlation between one's ability as an artist and one's ability to articulate a position or convictions? Is it necessary to talk intelligently about one's work?*

KT: Yes, it is necessary. Here's a famous line from a dear friend of mine, an editor, who once said, "I can edit bad writing. I can't edit bad thinking." Conception is thought and often, the correlation between thought and the ability to articulate that thought shows up when you find something not well thought out, therefore not well defined when you try to speak about it.



Sandra Enterline
Melon, necklace
sterling, 6½ x 1½ x 1½"

"I definitely think that Sandra Enterline's *Melon* necklace is going to become an iconic object, as is Helen Shirk's bracelet; perhaps even Susan Wood-Onstad's hair ornament which is easily overlooked – it's small, but God is it gorgeous. Sandra Enterline's *Melon* necklace is just so incredibly erotic. It looks all mechanical, pristine, clean, calculated, and predetermined, yet it looks organic. It's like a seed from an out-of-Earth organism! The way it hangs, so low, it makes you very much aware of the body."

I was struck the day I heard Robert Ebendorf speak about his jewelry. He was very moving. His articulation matched his conceptions. Bruce Metcalf too. There is a correspondence between the ability to discuss what you're doing and what you're doing. Some artists can't articulate because they have nothing to say.

In my sophomore year of undergraduate school, a professor once told me that "One day you'll be able to discern conviction," and I thought, "Right." It's true, though. Conviction, by the way, is the one criteria I am looking for in a work of art, conviction being: I have a story, a point to make, and here's what I want to say. I like an artist to be somewhat intellectual, to think, to be connected to the world, to get out of the studio, to have wit. *That's* what strikes me today – how witless, how unconnected so many people are, how humorless. Or, the awful thing is that our humor is usually connected to just ghastly things: violence, or hurting somebody.

MR: *Which qualities unique to jewelry make it appealing to you as an art form?*

KT: We don't wear a pot, we don't wear our dishes or our furniture – some of us don't (laughter). The very act of wearing can have its own liberating forces. If you can say a lot in a small area, so that the piece is always alive and constantly telling new stories, constantly engaging people in dialogue or thought, that can be exciting. Think of it – you can reduce some profound statement to the size of a brooch or pendant you can wear, and it can say as much as a huge fresco, a Barnett Newman or Kenneth Noland painting. You can get the same power of imagination, the same power of intensity.

To me, John Iversen's enamel pieces are miraculous in that they brought you into a world of color – as though the body, physically, could enter the piece and then you were in a world of blue. Visually, you're just soaked up in blue.

Randy Stromsoe
Untitled, neckpiece
hand forged sterling

Roberta Williamson's brooch with the boat, water, and the pencil on the leaf served as a small trigger to me. It triggered all of the river scenes that I remember from my years in Ohio, where I would often go down to the Little Miami River. There was the same quality of water; there's a wonderful, gentle quality to the landscape that's so overlooked, overpowered by the majesty of the Sierras and the Rockies. In a work of jewelry she has taken a world slice, reduced it to that (the brooch), and for her and for anyone else who's experienced a river like that in the Midwest, you go from the specific – the brooch – to the general, and that general encompasses all sorts of feelings. So jewelry is like a light switch – it turns on all these emotions and remembrances – nostalgia, fear, anger, hurt, thought, puzzlement.

I have people ask me if I have a typed up list of criteria for the selection of a work of art. No! There are some guidelines, but ultimately what I'm looking for is some reaction. All art to me is telling a story. That doesn't mean I have to know what the story is, but it has to have something that makes me want to come back and look at it. Often I'm looking at a work of art or an object and I'm thinking, "Talk to me, speak to me, come on, what's wrong?" And it's not speaking because it has nothing to say.

"This is just the most *gorgeous* form – it's a sterling silver neckpiece in which the whole thing has beentwisted in the center – this *sumptuous* twist. He's treating metal like a piece of gum, but it's turned and handled with such knowledge of the material, such conviction of "I *know* what I'm doing and *here it is.*" Not at all timid. He made a statement, and he didn't have to go any further with it – there's nothing extraneous here."

I'm looking for a visceral reaction. If an object has only cleverness going for it, it wears thin, like the old one-liner – after a while, so what? I look at technique – technically, are you accomplished; conceptually – are you interesting? Are you a rare bird or a common bird?

Two of the hardest things for an artist to know are when to begin and when to stop. To me that's the mark of a true artist – to have the courage to know when to do those [two things].

MR: *In contemporary culture, museums typically are invested with the power to evaluate and validate art. How should they acknowledge contemporary jewelry?*

KT: I think there should be a little more risk-taking. Museums are dull, conservative institutions commanded, by and large, by dull, conservative people. (Laughter) I'm serious. Look at boards – look at the controversies we face now. We have a lot of gutless directors, gutless curators who are *terrified* that a penis or a vagina is going to get in the wrong hands, (no pun intended), that it's going to be seen by the wrong person.

What an awful thing; we deny our sexuality, we deny our bodies, we deny our death – the great taboo in this culture. Why the hesitancy? Why the trouble? I'm questioning museums as a gay white guy beginning to question my institution – I don't think I fit in them anymore. I don't want to paint myself as this romantic outsider, but I don't find that my desires, needs, and wishes seem to be so far out of the mainstream. And then I look at people of color and what they are asking for – and to me, multiculturalism comes down to this – people asking to be invited to the table; that's all it is. Without any explanation or justification of why you're there. Why aren't you there? Not to be a token – that's an extremely offensive thing, to be a token. So, expanding that, museums should not just be collecting jewelry, they should be paying attention to all this wonderful artistic creativity out there – in fiber, in ceramics, in furniture.

Today I was reading something that so distressed me, 1987 and 1988 reviews of "The Eloquent Object". Some of them struck me as the reviewer really writing so that he or she could read the writing later and think, "Am I not a clever intellectual?" because they were mean – gratuitously nasty without a point. This leads back to the persons making decisions about what enters a museum collection. By what authority are the decisions being made? I'd like to expand our perimeters.

MR: *How has "Jewels and Gems" been received?*

KT: It's amazing what people reveal about themselves in their comments or their questions. The positive comments about this whole exhibition have been encouraging and at the same time, they've revealed to me people must have thought this was going to be just one dumb little show. I don't think they had any idea what contemporary jewelry is like. How do you get past these stereotypes?

The most delightful, the wittiest, the most engaging, articulate, compelling, thoughtful, provoking jewelry being done is being done by people who have actually thought about something other than jewelry. They are bringing into their work a full life. They have not compartmentalized their life, "I'm a Jewelry Maker here and a Mother here or a Father here, et cetera." The world is brought into their work and you see something being said by people who read, who think, who are much bigger than themselves and out in the world, listening to people.

Susan Kinsley
Venus of Violent Verdure, 1991
fabricated copper, acrylic lacquer
7 x 6 x 2¼"

MR: *What points did you want to make with this exhibition?*

KT: The first point that I wanted the exhibition to make was that we *collect jewelry.* Besides exhibiting it, the second point is that we are *collecting* it – the operative being on the active – it's not a collection that's formed, it's a collection that is in formation. And I guess a third one is that a collection is really nothing more than a revelation. It's a process of making known what has been done, what is being done, who's working in California, who's not in the collection – so people will tell me, kindly, I hope, "Perhaps you might want to include this individual or these people." My call for information at the symposium is producing a few results, let's hope that continues. Right now it's a tracking process.

Something else I did that I want to get out to the public is I added the work of some people that might be questionable. Heidi Nahser, for example – she's just beginning. I believed in the piece, and I also thought it was good to encourage her. Peter Macchiarini, on the other hand, is an old timer, born in 1909. His work looks retrogressive, shall I say, passé? He's still designing in an idiom from the 50's and before; do you ignore this person? Is it charity? I don't know – it's not all neat and clean.

MR: *Are there any particular traits that reoccur or that have developed progressively over the fifty year period represented by this collection?*

"Some of Susan Kingsley's pieces will be those iconic pieces. *Venus of Violent Verdure* is just so stimulating, so suggestive of floral sprays from the nineteenth century. At first you think, Oh, the ultimate in sentimentality," and then you start to realize, "Oh my God, those are Venus fly traps – *ewww*!" It definitely says, "Don't touch me!" yet it's a brooch; brooches supposedly attract the viewer yet this is an item that repels – I love that quality about it. I love her use of form and color. Then you find all of these exaggerated hairs on the fly traps themselves. You're wearing something quite three-dimensional that goes beyond the wearer, interfering with the space of someone else out there, and the *whole idea* is entrapment – the Venus fly trap lives off of other organisms. One of the comments she's making with this piece is about human relationships."

KT: I guess the marked feature of the collection, apart from the De Patta collection, is diversity. It seems to be a common theme in all craft. I don't sense a collective vision – I can't look at Arline Fisch's students' work and say, "Here's a group of pieces obviously made by Fisch students." I don't see that there's a distinct San Jose State or San Diego State or Long Beach State aesthetic. In fact, you could just take this whole exhibition and put it in Florida and call it "Florida Jewelry" and probably it wouldn't look terribly out of place.

"Quite frankly, I don't know how I feel about Kent Raible's pieces. We spent quite a poke o' dough on those (laughter). Which is good. Does that mean they shouldn't be in the collection? I think they probably are suffering because I'm as much colored as anybody else by the contemporary inclination away from such sumptuous materials and such beautiful colors. This craftsmanship is impeccable, exquisite, refined! Why should those qualities work against the piece? For me, they work for it."

People usually aren't in a place long enough for the place to have influence on them; influence is coming from their peers, mentors, their teachers – but even their teachers are being influenced by someone else, by what they see in books. Today an artist is free to follow no particular tenet, no particular individual. Contemporary students have some need to break away and stake their own territory, so that their work doesn't look like anyone else's – that seems to be considered a terrible thing today although it used to be part of a learning process.

MR: *Do you see any correlation between the Arts and Crafts Movement in California and the contemporary jewelry that's made here today?*

KT: I think there's a continuation of craft activity in California that's misunderstood; the break between the First World War, the Depression and the Second World War was not quite as clean as we've always thought it to be. What we're looking at is really an inheritance, without the people knowing that they are the progeny of Arts and Crafts practitioners.

The Arts and Crafts movement was an attempt by individuals to work in certain media, or several, collectively, often toward common goals, organizing in guilds to promote, sell and discuss their work. In a way, the university has become that context. It is now a major patron of the craft movement. So many of the people in this exhibition have received formal artistic training on a university level – that's a phenomenon that you didn't find at the turn of the century – but they're still plying their talents, their creative energies, to work in materials and expressions that fall out of the so-called mainstream of "real art".

There's a reality about the objects that I deal with that often strikes me with a force that I don't get with painting or photography. The unfortunate thing about showing jewelry in the museum context is it goes dead. These pieces demand to be held and touched and felt – they are understood more by touch than they are by sight. For example, in Sandra Enterline's donut bracelet, the musical quality of the movable parts is lost. The pachinko balls in Abrasha's bracelet are static. The jingly jangly musical quality of Ebendorf's necklace is lost. You don't feel the weight of Kent Raible's earrings or his pendants, so that the qualities of jewelry are now being shown statically as though they were paintings; they were never intended to be as static as we are showing them. It's a dilemma we face in a museum context.

Kent Raible
Untitled, pendant, 1993
18k, tourmaline, tanzanite, moonstones, pink sapphires, hand woven gold chain

MR: *What pieces in "Jewels and Gems" do you consider to be pivotal?*

KT: I don't consider any of them to be pivotal except, perhaps the Margaret De Patta collection, simply because it is now gaining international recognition. The very first photography request I had when I came here in '84 was for a 4" x 5" transparency of a pendant made in 1956. That's one of the gems, no pun intended, of our collection. So the De Patta collection is pivotal in that it's by one individual spanning thirty plus years, and it constitutes a discreet entity that can be studied as a collection.

MR: *Did the Oakland Museum's jewelry collection actually begin with the gift of the De Patta collection?*

KT: We might have had a few pieces come in before this, but the collection really began in the '60s. Now, my response might strike some as strange but we're really dealing with a recent phenomenon – we're dealing with a movement that's as old as I am. In 1943, what's now the American Craft Council was founded in New York. It's not like we have this depth and breadth and scope of history. I think that a call for us to be included into the hallowed halls of art is perhaps premature. We may not have collectively paid our dues, and sometimes I wonder, do we actually want to go into the halls? There's a wonderful French proverb which I absolutely love, "Beware of what you wish for..."

MR: *...you might get it. What feedback have you had about this exhibition? How would you like to see the collection develop?*

KT: The response to the symposium and to the collection has been more encouraging than I had any right to expect. It is a non-budget exhibition – that means we weren't even publicizing it. We put some objects from the permanent collection in this space and quietly let the public discover them. From the symposium, some people have called saying they would like to help us. I keep saying that with $5000 a year over a ten year period – we could add, easily, fifty pieces. Maybe that's too ambitious but I think we could.

I'd like to see the collection develop substantially. One of the things we did was add contemporary pieces – many of them made within this year or last. I want to drop back, pick up the historical material, and within ten years have the collection catalogued. I hope to have a document written saying, "Here is what I was hoping to do," so an individual doesn't come in looking at all the objects in a vacuum – so there's some history in what we were trying to do with this history. That goal has to be fulfilled by raising the money to be able to do it.

"Abrasha's bracelet is intellectually demanding – for the same reasons that I find Sandra's *Melon* necklace wonderful – the mechanical quality to it, the intellectual thought that has gone into it. It's cold and crisp and clean."

This was a one-time event. I do want to emphasize throughout this interview that this was a miracle. I couldn't do the same thing for furniture or hollowware.

MR: *What do the contemporary jewelry community and museums have to offer each other? What manner and level of interaction is possible, desirable? How might each enhance the other?*

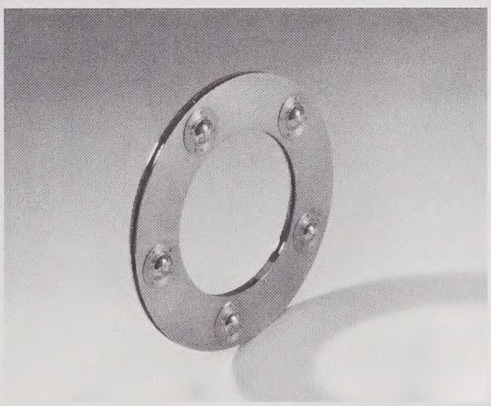
KT: Frequently I have artists who come to me who feel they've been dismissed and overlooked – you know, *it works both ways.* Don't hold your curators responsible for a lack of representation in museums – support your curators and start to work on the powers that be who make the decisions. Curators are not omnipotent. Often people have made comments to me that lead me to think that they belive I am in total control of everything I do. My God, I wish I were – this place would be 10,000 times more exciting, (laughing) even if I say so.

So you've got to – one – educate yourselves about museums. Two, make yourselves known. And don't be part of the problem, if you sit back, never make an effort to get your work *known* – I'm not saying into a collection, I'm saying known. Help to identify patrons that would be willing to support a purchase or a gift. The artist often has rapport with the clients that the curator doesn't. You know your client, I know my patrons who might be interested in jewelry.

SNAG could become much more actively involved in getting collections and getting works of art into institutions. We aren't talking about Titians or Picassos or Rodins; we're talking about a few thousands of dollars. SNAG could work with some institutions to help form some travelling exhibitions. Our director would be very receptive to that.

Let me end with this: as small as "Jewels and Gems" is in terms of space there are over one hundred pieces in the exhibition; it's huge. It's an exhibition with really no budget, yet the amount of publicity it's garnering, this positive response... just think what could be done with an exhibition with a substantial catalogue, a lecture series, a budget to promote it.

I think we Americans, so many of us, have fallen into a mode that someone else will fight for my rights, someone else will guarantee that my most basic civil rights are not violated or taken away. Somebody else will see that my work gets into a museum collection; somebody else will see that the exhibition is formed; well, sometimes there ain't no somebody else.



Abrasha
Untitled, bracelet, 1992
18k, pachinko balls

Mija Riedel is an artist and writer who lives in San Francisco, California.

1. Ron Ho
Treasures of the Orient, 1974
sterling silver, carved ivory beads, Chinese carnelian, glass beads, carved mother-of-pearl, 10 x 6 x ½"
Nathalie Hee Collection, Honolulu, HI
Photo: Rod Slemmons

2. Kiff Slemmons
Nanauq, 1984
sterling silver, ebony, Eskimo ivory cigarette holder
3½ x 5¼ x ½"
The Saxe Collection, Menlo Park, CA
Photo: Rod Slemmons

3. Laurie Hall
I Get a Kick Out of Champagne, 1989
sterling silver, copper, found African beads, electrical wire, leather, Formica Colorcore
16 x 4½ x 1½"
Courtesy of Connell Gallery, Atlanta
Photo: Richard Nicol

4. Ron Ho
Forbidden City, 1988
Antique carved jade with fabricated and forged sterling silver
11 x 5 x 1"
Brenda Boardman Collection, Doty, WA
Photo: Rod Slemmons

5. Ramona Solberg
Chinese Gambler, 1991
sterling silver, ebony game piece, leather thong, mah-jongg piece, Thai gambling piece, ivory, Chinese coin and mother-of-pearl gaming piece
11 x 5 x ¾"
Alida Latham Collection, Seattle
Photo: Courtesy of Facere Gallery, Seattle

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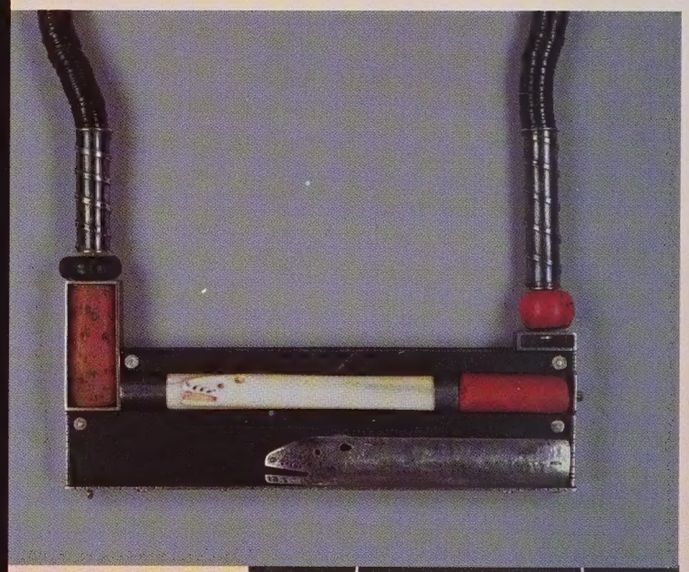
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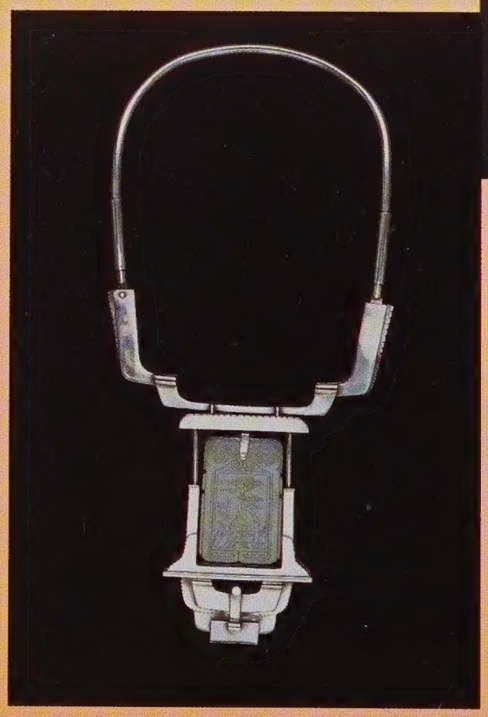
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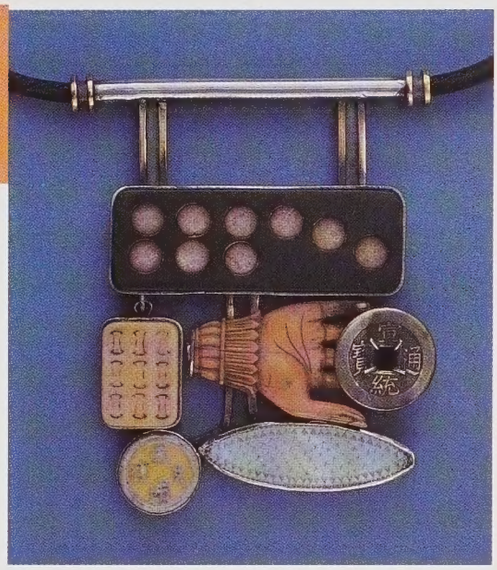
THE AGE OF SOLBERG



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Text by Matthew Kangas

The art of Ramona Solberg (b. 1921) – artist, teacher, author, curator, traveler–not only changed Pacific Northwest metals, it changed much of contemporary American jewelry. Her necklaces are few in number (no more than 200 over a 30-year period) but their influence has been vast. Rejecting modernist purity of form and the preciousness of materials common to mid-century American studio jewelry, Solberg pioneered the use of ethnic and found objects in order to reintroduce personal expression in the widest sense of the word.

Ironically for a woman so self-effacing, much of the literature surrounding her has dwelt on her fascinating life. For our purposes, an analytical and interpretive, rather than biographical, approach may answer the question "What does the art of Ramona Solberg mean?" and determine why the period 1975 to 1995 may be called, in retrospect, the Age of Solberg.

Her students from the Seattle Public Schools (she first taught junior-high), Central Washington University (Bill Ritchie, James Marta, Barbara Burnham, Pat Mahar, Robert Iverson), and the University of Washington (Robert Bruya, Flora Book, Elizabeth Chenoweth Palmer, Nadine Kairya, Cheryl Leo-Gwinn, Marilyn Ravanal) have been numerous. A few – Ron Ho and Laurie Hall – have not only been directly influenced enough to comprise, along with non-Solberg student Kiff Slemmons an informal *école*, they have further transferred and extended her ideas about both the value of informal material construction and the global nature of American craft as a whole. International rather than regional or national, her cultural synthesis and unexpected juxtapositions of Third World souvenirs and mundane Americana have grown out of a lifetime of travel to every corner of the world including Antarctica. Solberg's vision (which has been communicated to artists as diverse as Robert Ebendorf and Thomas Mann) is one of inclusiveness rather than exclusion, of visual simplicity rather than complexity, of modesty rather than conceptual pretension.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to clear away some of the clutter of rhetoric comprising the responses to her work to see that work more clearly for what it is, a forum for what she called, in another context, "limitless possibilities of life." Aspects of Solberg's life have been extensively chronicled by other writers[1], but few critics have sought out possible meaning systems for her art or for that of her associates and colleagues. But before attempting that, let us state a few helpful observations of writers, artists, and her enthusiastic fellows, about that which constitutes the Age of Solberg.

"If we take Solberg at her own words, two thirds art educator, one third jeweler," then it is possible to see all her art as educational. But what are the lessons? In my opinion, the educational and moral goal of her art is to bring humanity closer together. Active in the World Crafts Council as well as a craftsman fellow of the American Craft Council, the artist claims, "If people would travel more, there would be more world understanding."[2]

Firmly believing in a "united humanity through the crafts," Solberg has traveled so extensively that her experiences have accumulated not only as touristic forays but as low-key cultural diplomacy and informal statesmanship.

Pluralist in a time of resurgent nationalism, internationalist in a period of emerging cultural differences, Solberg and her art blur cultural and ethnic differences while preserving unique properties of each borrowed material. Thus, her world view is rooted in the shared global unity of craft and extrapolates memory of place into a unique art object. Never a serialist nor a production jeweler, Solberg approaches each work as a singular aesthetic entity using design, composition, placement and juxtaposition as organizing principles for an art which is immediately accessible on one level but also prone to wider and deeper appreciation and analysis.

1. Ramona Solberg
Talkeetna, 1991
fabricated silver, mastodon ivory antique scrimshaw, carabou bone buttons, leather thong, 4 x 9 x ½"
Lloyd Herman Collection, Bellingham, WA
Photo: Rod Slemmons

2. Ramona Solberg
Bow-Regard, 1994 [detail]
ebony, mother-of-pearl, sterling silver, leather
12 x 5"
Courtesy of Facere Gallery, Seattle, WA
Photo: Nancy Hines

3. Laurie Hall
Silver Salmon Ceremony, 1985
sterling silver, carved pine, bone, chamois, horsehair
16 x 6 x 1"
King County Arts Commission, Seattle. WA
Photo: Roger Schreiber

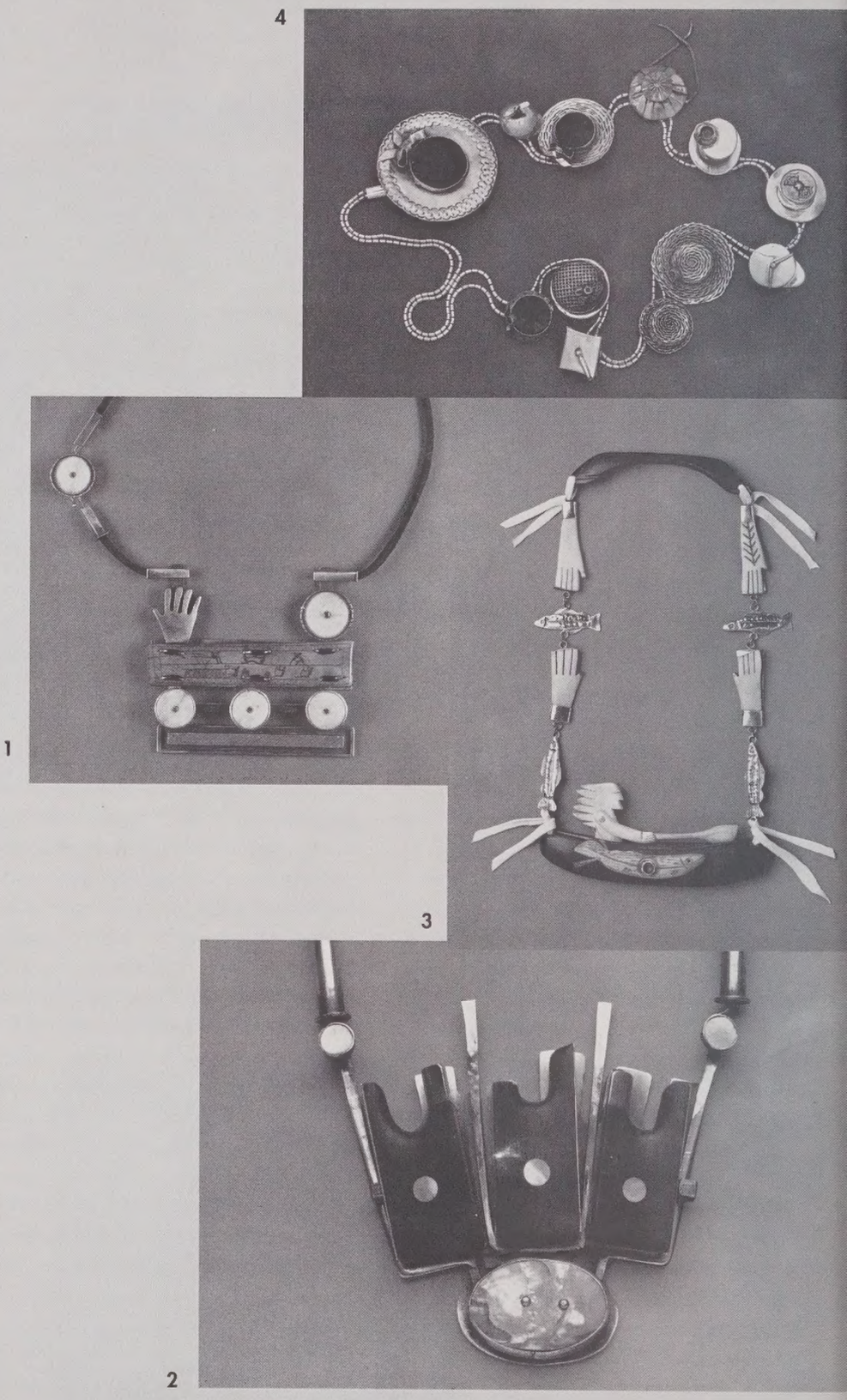
4. Laurie Hall
Hats Off!, 1988
sterling silver, brass, copper, and found antique buttons,
16 x 6 x ½"
Private collection, Los Angeles, CA
Photo: Richard Nicol

5. Laurie Hall
L. H. Bean Pole, 1984
sterling silver, bone, conductor wire, abalone
8 x 3 x ½"
Sandy Grotta Collection, New Vernon, NJ
Photo: Roger Schreiber

6. Ramona Solberg
Pendant, 1988 [detail]
bone, dominoes, ebony, ivory, leather thong
15 x 5½ x 3"
Sandy McCord Collection, Bellevue, WA
Photo: Rod Slemmons

7. Robert Ebendorf
Man and His Pet Bee, 1968
copper, photo tintype, silver and found objects
5 x 3½"
Daphne Farago Collection
Photo: Mark Greenberg

8. Ron Ho
Bering Sea, 1985
Northwest Coast Indian harpoon tip and lip plug, Afghan beads, mother-of-pearl disk, forged/fabricated silver,
11 x 7 x 1"
Courtesy of the artist, Seattle, WA
Photo: Robert Liu



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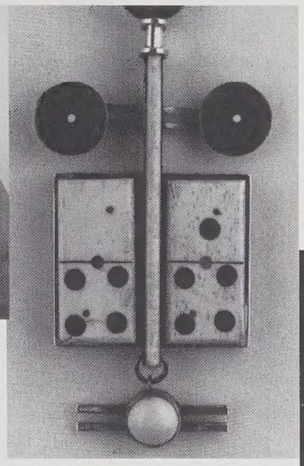

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Her University of Washington School of Art colleague Spencer Moseley explained her formal powers: "repetition of shape given extended meaning by the repetition of process or pattern of growth. Thus, repetition becomes allusion and illusion."[3] Referring to a key work, *Africa* (1973), Moseley added, "The title also identifies a formal relationship to another culture. That relationship however is one of assimilation not imitation...[She is a] contemporary primitive."[4]

That may open charges twenty years later of colonialism, racism, and cultural condescension given the recent controversies over the use of the word "primitive," but it would be an inaccurate accusation. Hugely respectful of the art of post colonial nations, Solberg has spoken out against modernizing changes which delete indigenous cultural practices such as beading and jewelry-making and defends herself with humor: "I don't plunder but I sure do shop."[5]

Cindy Cetlin really began the first critical analysis of Solberg discussing *Mudra* (1983), at length and proposing "many levels of meaning," revealing the necklaces' deeply subjective origins: "Solberg confesses that these necklaces are initially, secretly, made for herself which accounts for their consistently personal iconography."[6]

Less illuminating but on the right track of delineating Solberg's masks and veils, her aesthetic *chador*, Carolyn Benesh claimed an anti-elitist, strong populist, and exuberant democratic bent for the Seattle artist.[7]

Kiff Slemmons has hinted at parallels to linguistic structures in Solberg's compositions. On the one hand, the various elements may be read as plot or narrative chunks for the wearer to create stories out of (even if we now know these elements had subjective, experiential roots). Comparably, each item might be seen as a word in a poem, an approach first stressed about other American craft artists by critic and editor Rose Slivka in her essay for the Renwick Gallery exhibition, "The Object as Poet."[8] Slivka holds that the unexpected juxtapositions of found objects recalls Joseph Cornell and Solberg's work, with its simple but sophisticated choices of elements, definitely sustains such a reading. She is making wearable *haiku*.

Slemmons stresses Solberg's "visual language," however, "how things look," and draws attention to how, in Solberg,"the visual language comes first since written or spoken language may not always be available...and visual language changes [depending on] different idioms with different times [and] different cultures."[9]

Placing Solberg in the historical context of modernism, Slemmons reminds us that, as with most of the U.W. School of Art faculty of her day, Solberg's modernist pedigree was impeccable. Her links to modernism, besides her tutelage with Ruth Penington and her postgraduate studies in Norway and England, include the use of assemblage, collage, and the grid as an organizing structure, the primacy of design, and an affinity for ethnic art that could be traced back to Matisse and the Cubists.

The younger artist also points out how courageous Solberg's use of representational imagery was "at a time when abstract pure form signaled 'higher' development along with intellectual detachment."[10]

In this sense, Solberg along with J. Fred Woell, Robert Ebendorf, and Donald Tompkins, was among the few American jewelers to anticipate representation and the cultural content of the postmodern condition: sensitivity to Third World and "marginal" populations; appreciation of popular culture, and the elevation of craft as an alternative to mainstream media such as painting.

The Age of Solberg transversed the modernist period into the postmodern. Another key participant in this crucial transition is Ron Ho. As Sylvia Kennedy wrote of him: "He likes to use objects from different cultures together in one piece. This may stem from his growing up in Hawaii where food, language, and friends from many cultures coexist."[11]

1. Ramona Solberg
Dinka Mauve, 1983
cast sterling silver elements,
antique African glass trade beads, coral
16 x 6 x 1"
Diane Engebretsen Collection., Bellevue, WA
Photo: Roger Schreiber

2. Ramona Solberg
Bodum, 1994 [detail]
sterling silver, African-made glass beads
8 x 8 x 1"
Courtesy of Facere Gallery, Seattle, WA
Photo: Nancy Hines

3. Ron Ho
The Tortoise and Tenebrae, 1977
sterling silver, glass beads, and carnelian
14 x 3 x 12"
Marion Gartler Collection, Seattle, WA
Photo: Rod Slemmons

4. Ramona Solberg
Pay Day, 1969
sterling silver, Thai porcelain gambling
pieces, brass overall button, milagro figure,
watch stem, mah-jongg piece, dice
7 x 10 x ⅜"
Anne Gould Hauberg Collection, Seattle, WA
Photo: Susan Dirk

1

2

3

4

Ron Ho
The Rise of the Phoenix, 1978-80
fossilized agate, jade, sterling silver, pearls
12 x 4 x 1½"
Marion Gartler Collection, Seattle, WA

Ramona Solberg
There's a Persimmon in My Garden, 1991
cast silver, bronze,
porcelain netsuke, drilled ivory, leather
9 x 7"
Jean Eaton Collection, Seattle, WA
Photo: Nancy Hines

Also an educator, Ho sees the influence of children's art and the sense of play as a central element in Solberg. Giving her credit for his own shift to found object jewelry using ethnic art, Ho recalled: "She could see the beauty of ethnic designs and shapes."[12] And as Laurie Hall pointed out about Ho, "Ron did Ramona better than Ramona!"[13]

With much of his art now obliquely treating his Chinese-American heritage, Ho is indebted to Solberg for both her reverence of Asian art and her courage to use inexpensive materials. Thanks to her, he "gravitated to pendant shapes." Many would agree that Ho's Solbergian mixture of found objects, Asian artifacts and the evocation of travel and personal memories not only mirror the older artist's interests, they often go much farther in piling on elements redolent of the Pacific Rim.

Ho's forms and compositions are much more baroque, however, and in pieces like *Treasures of the Orient* (1974) and *The Rise of the Phoenix* (1978-80), entire screenplays seem evoked by the poetic and sensuous combinations. In addition, Ho's compositions are less frontal and grid-like than are Solberg's.

Two other artists, Slemmons and Hall, adapted Solberg's principles to their own ends with comparable individuality. *Nanauq* (1984) is closest to Solberg's aesthetic among all of Slemmons's metals. Slemmons used silver to echo the original ethnic image, doubling the polar bear head of the original Eskimo ivory cigarette holder, something Solberg had done with her bead necklaces, creating silver "doubles" of trade beads. Like Solberg, Slemmons's art uses found elements to retrieve memory and transform it into personal expression.

Hall's retrieval deals more with American folk art, retaining aspects of nostalgia and cultural memory, adding them to a rich storehouse of humor and pragmatic American character. "My heritage is Northwest Oregon pioneer so I couldn't use all the same kind of found objects they did but I wanted to have it be honest and real, whatever I was doing and Ramona was there encouraging."[14]

Hall warmed to the informality of Solberg's construction which tallied with her own interest in the looser fabrication of American folk art objects (e.g., *I Get a Kick Out of Champagne*, 1989).

Finally, if we recast our views of American art jewelry during the past 30 years, incorporating a tolerance for found objects, downplayed technique, and an affinity to ethnic art, a definition of American metals becomes wider, more inclusive, and infinitely richer. What the Age of Solberg produced was significant for the artists discussed above. What its purview reveals is a large body of work by a number of artists, including Solberg, whose work deserves greater attention, analysis, and critical scrutiny.

Notes

[1] Cindy Cetlin, "Art, Artifact and the Jewelry of Ramona Solberg," *Metalsmith*, Summer 1985, 14-1; and Carolyn Benesh, "I'm sort of the Henry Ford of jewelry," *Ornament*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1989 58-63.
[2] Ramona Solberg, conversation with the author, July 12, 1994.
[3] Spencer Moseley, "The Necklaces of Ramona Solberg," *Craft Horizons*, June, 1973, 20-24.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Solberg,conversation, July 12, 1994.
[6] Cetlin, "Art, Artifact and the Jewelry of Ramona Solberg".
[7] Benesh, "I'm sort of the Henry Ford of jewelry".
[8] Rose Slivka, *The Object as Poet*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977.
[9] Kiff Slemmons, letter to the author, July 20, 1994.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Sylvia S.J. Kennedy, "Ron Ho's Transformations: Found Objects into Jewelry," *Ornament*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 1986.
[12] Ron Ho, conversation with the author, July 8, 1994.
[13] Laurie Hall, conversation with the author, July 18, 1994.
[14] Ibid.

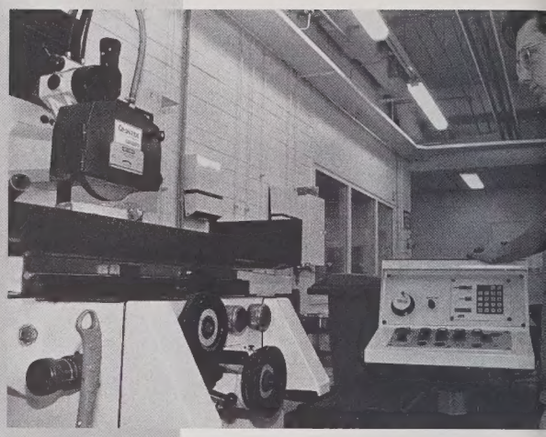
Matthew Kangas, a Seattle art critic and curator, has written for *Sculpture*, *Art in America*, *American Ceramics*, *Metalsmith*, and *GLASS*.

On some of the

differences in Metal Arts

Learning from Europe:

education in



Automated Grinders in the machine shop

Europe and the USA

by Heikke Seppä

Metalsmith recently received a letter from Heikki Seppä, offering some of his observations regarding education in metals in the US as compared to that in Europe. I have chosen to give Professor Seppä's comments a bit more space than a normal letter in order to generate some dialogue about where we are in metals education in the US, and where we wish to be in the future. While most of the readers of *Metalsmith* are not academics, I think that we would all have to agree that educational issues affect everyone of us, from the jeweler who takes workshops at the local crafts guilds to the chairperson of a major metals departments at a large university. Additionally Professor Seppä sent along some very interesting photographs of some European metals workrooms, which will allow readers to, at least, dream about the ideal studio. *The Editor*

The fundamental need for education in the US is ideologically based. It's goals are subjective and emotional, it offers no career guarantees, and it lacks a niche in the fabric of society.

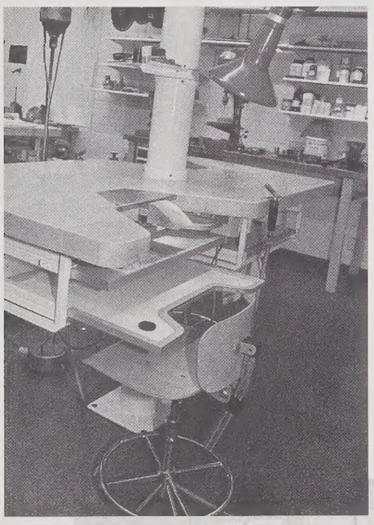
Metal arts education in the US is too fragmented and dependent on far too few teachers to be called comprehensive. Often the teacher's success and fame in the field is the only driving force in the classroom. He/she is like a pastor, priest, or rabbi maintaining harmony and positive attitudes toward the work.

Most teachers have developed a single technical specialty and an ideological point of view. These are the main elements which tend to create limitations – real or imaginary – on that teacher's program. One person cannot possibly be a specialist in all of the technical aspects in the vast field of metalsmithing.

Furthermore, facilities in US Schools are cramped and inadequately supplied with the necessary equipment and space. Many schools are still making do with salvaged, invented, and makeshift equipment. Metals departments frequently inherit obsolete, discarded leftovers from industry. While scrounging for raw materials and tools takes a lot of imagination, it little prepares the student for employment.

Most schools also lack adequate safety and carefully and intelligently designed traffic patterns. Efficient and professional work-habits are not taught because the teachers, themselves, don't have that kind of experience. This leads to an environment and work place in which a lot of time is lost. Students get comfortable with these habits, and thus will have difficulty in fitting into real-life work situations.

Engraving by hand



One-legged work bench:
instant height adjustment
instant orientation to the studio lights and ambient noise, halogen light,
light arm has suction to eliminate fumes,
all services supplied by center pipe: gas, power, suction, etceteras.

The curricula in the metal arts in the US is often neither linear nor progressive. Seldom do teachers say to students: "You must do this before you can succeed in that." To many students the basics are boring and they want to start their studies with far too difficult a project. When this is permitted a very irresponsible education results. It only wastes time. (This is most likely a hang-over from the sixties and seventies, when it was fashionable to "Do your own thing."). Orderly learning hastens progress. There is hardly a tool used in metalsmithing which doesn't call for some practice before its benefits are realized.

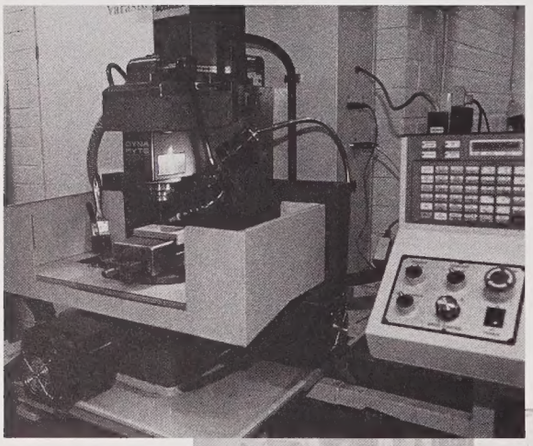
European schools, on the other hand, have definite objectives and schools meet the practical, established needs of industry, culture, and commerce. There is a need for metalsmiths in the societal structure. Graduates don't have to create their world after leaving school.

The European (specifically Scandinavian) approach to metal arts education is based on clear objectives. The schools:

1. Train workers for industry- who will elevate the product quality in the long run, in whatever capacity.

2. Give training in and encourage careers for students as workers, leaders, artists/designers, business people, conservators, repairmen/women, and teachers.

3. Give training in and encourage the skills needed to be a small business owner/operator, an entrepreneur, shop/studio employer and employee, and the schools encourage the propagation of the profession.



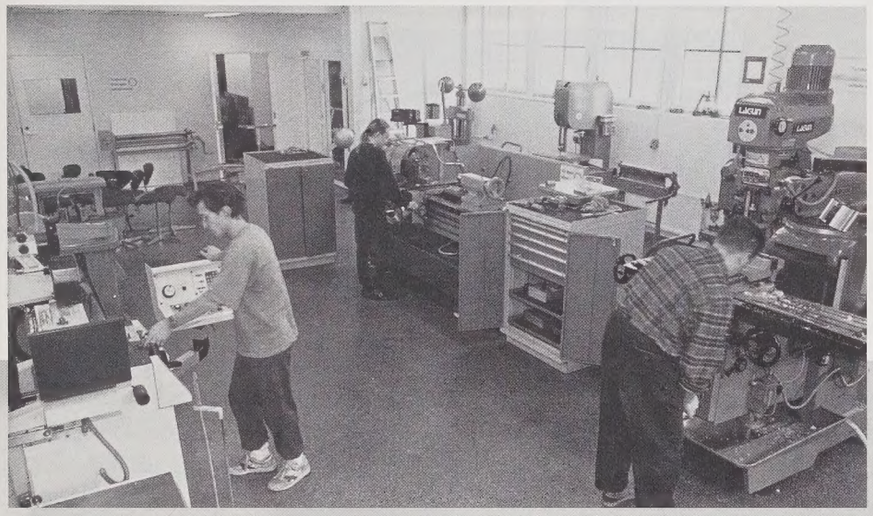
Computer aided tool making

As an example of the differences, Finland, a country with a population of only five million people built a special 3-story building to house their school of gold and silversmithing: "Lahti Design Institute". It is comprised of 9 full-time, and 15 part-time instructors for 100 full time and 35 part-time students. All instructors are specialists. They know their specialty very well – and they can teach it. There is no stardom, except among their peers. Teachers hired to teach silversmithing, for example, don't have to know the finer points of goldsmithing, gem setting, etceteras – only silversmithing at its highest level. And so it is with all instructors. Instructors work a regular 30 plus hours a week, in several levels of instruction. Unlike in the US, promotions in rank do not lessen nor change the workload. This guarantees a constant level of teaching imput to the program without diluting the quality of instruction.

Of equal importance is the fact that an applicant's suitability is screened in several stages. This requirement, quite simply, avoids wasted instruction. The normal time of study is four years though most students already have an undergraduate university level education before entering. Over 10% of the students are from foreign countries and instruction is offered in at least three languages, but the general running of the school is done in Finnish.

The school is a veritable center for help and information, serving students, industry, and patrons at large. Special work and commissions are accepted from civic, cultural, governmental, and religious organizations. These commissions are handled in a professional manner and they often lead to teamwork in design and execution. Individual projects however, dominate the program. Students participate in international competitions, and consistently win ⅓ of the mid-European prizes.

Gemology is studied in all facets and taught by specialists



Machine shop

The curriculum is as comprehensive as one can imagine. If it has anything to do with gold-silversmithing it is taught—from metallurgy through computer-design to gemology. The facility has specific studios designated for different activities, 16 separate class-rooms plus display areas. During the planning phase a new work-table with only one leg was designed. The two belly-hole table has a leg in the middle from the floor to ceiling containing a 5" pipe through which all services and ventilation are accessed, providing both safety and ease of house-keeping. Many other innovations in the state-of-the- art school may be found. The ergonomics of the spaces offer a vast improvement over the numerous cobbled together studios of other institutions, ranging from the color of floor tiles, to lights, traffic, acoustics, disappearing walls, accessible audiovisual aids, down to the height of individual worktables and stools, etceteras. Gone are the dark dungeons of yesteryears where the worktable faced a corner or a wall. Now the worker faces the longest view of the studio, in good light and almost invisible white walls.

Traditionally, project planning and design has been very directed and in a "straight-jacket" format. Even though it is now getting looser it is still not as spontaneous and free as American schools. Overall the Europeans are technologically ahead and they use that advantage in their education. This may be the reason that, comparatively speaking, American craftsmanship is generally not as good as that of Europeans. In the US the emphasis on art-content rather than on execution and technological expertise almost certainly contributes to this. There should be a better balance. Industry, perhaps could help solve this problem. How do we get them to try? I suggest that schools and industry make peace-shake hands and work together.

Let's learn something from the Europeans.

The most successful art disciplines have worked with industry, i.e.: photography., ceramics, glass, commercial art, and advertising, business, printing, fiber arts, fashion – why not metal? As it is, industry is not hurting us; we are not hurting them. But what a plus, if we worked together blowing into the same embers and rekindling the flame.

Heikki Seppä is Professor Emeritus of metals at the School of Art, Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri.

All photographs by V. M. Väärä

Sandra Enterline
Totem Pendant, pendant, 1992
sterling, nickel silver
5 x ⅞ x ⅞"

Christina Y. Smith
Anarchist to Monarchist, brooch, 1993
silver
3 x 3½ x 1"

Jewelry Symposium

The Oakland California Crafts Museum
Oakland, California
July 16, 1994

by Susan Kingsley

The Oakland Museum, California Crafts Museum (recently re-named the Contemporary Craft Museum) and Susan Cummings Gallery presented a one day Jewelry Symposium on July 16. Held at the Oakland Museum, there was a standing room only crowd of 100 of which only a few, surprisingly, were artists. Following an introduction by Curator of Decorative Arts Kenneth Trapp were the featured speakers: San Diego artist and professor Arline Fisch, San Francisco Bay area art historian and independent writer Charlotte Moser, and independent curator Lloyd Herman. The symposium concluded with a panel moderated by Susan Cummings and Kenneth Trapp with artists: Colette, Marilyn da Silva, Sandra Enterline, and Christina Smith, who each gave a brief slide presentation of their recent work.

The impetus for the event was the concurrence of three significant exhibitions, "Jewels and Gems, Collecting California Jewelry" at the Oakland Museum, "Brilliant Stories: American Narrative Jewelry" at the California Crafts Museum, and "California Jewelers" at the Susan Cummings Gallery. The joint effort of the three entities in organizing this symposium was commendable. As one who has attended many conferences and symposia and listened to numerous lectures and panels about our field, I found of this one full of little surprises and realizations – new ideas, connections, and perspectives. For those in attendance who were less familiar with the field, I suspect the majority of the audience in this case, the symposium and its related exhibitions were an opportunity to be exposed to a wide selection of previously overlooked, undervalued, and largely undocumented artworks.

In his opening remarks, Kenneth Trapp observed that the role of the curator is to be future oriented even when delving into the past. He described the exhibition "Jewels and Gems" as a miracle, because he "was able to convince some of the administration to make a firm commitment to develop a jewelry collection – with money." He pointed out that we should remember that the pieces we see today will not always remain contemporary. "We must collect and protect our history and not leave it to someone else to tell our story." He related that this was brought home poignantly when he curated the "Arts and Crafts Movement in California" exhibition because not one single piece ever appeared that he could identify as having been made by a person in an arts and crafts guild.

Although she found her assignment to speak about the history of jewelry in southern California a "difficult one," Arline Fisch made a lively and visually interesting presentation. She began by stating that her own interests and lifework have been "global" – and that although she had lived in southern California for more than 30 years, her knowledge of the history of the region was scant. Research turned up very little documentation of jewelers and metalsmiths in southern California. The slide library at the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles provided the primary support. In one case they had the only existing documentation of an artist's work, and it was only because the artist, now deceased, had donated her slides. Sadly, some images that have "survived" are badly discolored because of the use of RGV film, a motion picture film which was apparently used by many cost conscious southern California artists in the 60's and 70's.

Fisch discussed the work of sculptors who made jewelry, the California Design Exhibitions at the Museum of Pasadena which provided a showcase for the most imaginative work being done, the universities with jewelry programs, the teachers who came from elsewhere, and the graduates who went elsewhere or stayed in California. While the history of the craft before 1950 would have been interesting to hear, her fact filled account of southern California jewelry and metalsmithing from the last decades answered Trapp's entreatment that it is important that we collect and protect the history of our own time.

It was startling to see work that now looked "dated" while remembering how innovative it was fifteen years ago. It raised, anew, questions about the prevalence in California of large scale work and the uninhibited use of materials such as anodized aluminum, titanium, and plastic. Was there some regionally felt impulse to make work that had dramatic presence and used unconventional materials – work that was distinctly different and outside a modernist European aesthetic? Was the East Coast bent on carrying on the traditions of European metalsmithing and jewelry, while the West Coast was reflecting the influence of South American and Asian cultures? Fisch's own work bears a strong connection to ancient jewelry from various cultures around the

world. Although there was a great deal of diversity in the Southern California work Fisch presented, one couldn't imagine it having come out of Pennsylvania. She concluded with the observation that in the 1990s she saw a higher level of skill, more technical advancement, and a greater number of metalsmiths earning a living from their craft than when she came to California thirty years ago,

Charlotte Moser brought a very different perspective to her overview of the history of metalsmithing and jewelry in Northern California. An art historian, she is particularly interested in the impact of cultural conditions on regional artistic production. After living in the San Francisco Bay area for more than five years, she was shocked by the realization that there has not been more study of California crafts and their influence on contemporary American art. She wondered how the sense of California as being on the cutting edge in materials and ideas had developed into a 'mystique' about the region, and how the bay area crafts movement, so potent and visible nationally in the 1960s, had come about.

She began by looking at the Arts and Crafts movement in California, and pointed out that like England and the rest of the United States, there was very little jewelry produced. She attributed this to the idea that jewelry and personal adornment had aristocratic associations which contradicted the basic democratic principles of the Arts and Crafts movement. Manifestations of the movement in California included architecture such as the mission and shingle styles, designs for homes that merged living space with the landscape and functional objects for the home in clay, fiber, wood, and metal. She pointed out that awareness and appreciation for native and preindustrial cultures, a tenet of the International Arts and Crafts Movement was already in place in California, probably because of its existing native population.

Moser stressed the role of education in the evolution of craft in the Bay Area. The University of California at Berkeley, long considered a world class institution, began teaching craft in 1911, the year women in California got the vote. Textile and metal arts were part of the Home Economics Department and many women studied to be art teachers, still one of the few acceptable career opportunities open to women. In the early 1930s there was an attempt to close it and she related how a strong department head, a woman with a PhD in Anthropology, saved it by renaming it the Department of Decorative Arts. It remained until 1962 when it became the Department of Design. Three faculty members hired to teach in 'design' were among those instrumental in changing the face of craft in California and the country by integrating contemporary art issues into craft media – Ed Rossbach, Marvin Lipofsky, and Peter Volkous.

Moser also discussed the influence of the Bauhaus and a number of individual artists before concluding with slides of a few contemporary Northern California jewelers. It was interesting to think of our geographical region as comprising a "cultural community" that includes craft and metalsmithing. Most of us feel that our practice of craft, jewelry, and metalsmithing has set us apart from artistic dialog in the community and we tend to think of our national, craft and media specific organizations and publications as our 'community' or even extended family. Fisch's career beyond her region could be considered evidence of this propensity.

Lloyd Herman addressed the history of jewelry, from ancient fibulas designed to hold clothing together, to amulets that were believed to have the power to protect a wearer, to badges of office and badges of power. He talked about gemstones and how the symbolism of each one was the "story of its power distilled and embodied in abstraction" and related how other cultures hold beliefs that wearing certain jewelry can prevent disease, enhance fertility, or prevent the influence of evil forces.

Herman also talked about several jewelry exhibitions that he has curated. "Good as Gold", in 1980, was intended to illustrate the resurgence, among jewelry makers, of interest in materials besides gold, and concepts other than preciousness and status. Also mentioned was "Brilliant Stories", which includes several of the same artists and focuses on narrative work in contemporary American jewelry and provides a selection of works, rich in visual interest and meaning, which Herman categorized as commemorative, myths, folktales, and portraiture. He concluded by saying that "storytelling in jewelry is as diverse as the stories we read in books", and that we need to raise the consciousness of the public in order to make them bestsellers.

The afternoon session concluded with the panel of artists, each of whom showed slides and spoke briefly about their work. Sandra Enterline showed work from her *Opposition Series,* each piece consisting of two related but opposing pendants coupled by a thin chain, allowing them to be worn on both sides of the body simultaneously. The egg-like forms are quietly organic and loaded with suggested meanings. Although made of precious materials, gold and silver, the subtle richness of the colors, the finely finished surfaces and the minimal forms result in jewelry that transcends any categorization. Christina Smith titles her narrative broaches with captions which summarize an event or situation from her life. She tells her stories, whether sad, profound, or frightening, with great humor and wit, adding another dimension to her beautifully conceived broaches. Marilyn da Silva's most recent work didn't happen to be jewelry. After a devastating house fire, the artist began a series of candlesnuffers: *Put Out the Fire.* Although one could smile at the symbolism of a snake for the insurance company, a beehive for home and security, a cage for the songbird she lost, the desire to heal and to look forward was present in these functional, unpretentious, and yet profound pieces. Collette, who is among other things, a painter and enamelist, spoke of her jewelry as being from a different perspective. Although she works in precious materials, it is the imagery, her intricate and delicate, rich, mysterious, and sensitive narratives that seduce. One is glad that she decided to be the difficult and rebellious outsider, outlaw, and outcast that she described in her autobiographical introduction.

A discussion followed some provocative questions from the moderators. Susan Cummings, noting that confrontation is a major feature in the work of a number of contemporary jewelers, posed the question "Does jewelry always have to be nice?" Trapp asked the artists: "What qualifies a piece of jewelry as exceptional?" The answers, while not easily summarized, involved stories and anecdotes: lessons learned in years of experience in making, wearing, and observing jewelry being used. The discussion grew to include the audience, and underscored the richness and complexity possible in an artform that interacts with life in such an intimate way. This provided a satisfying conclusion which was not one of closure, but one which encouraged the appreciation of the historical aspects of jewelry in California coupled with an optimistic anticipation of what will come next.

Susan Kingsley is a metalsmith, critic, and writer who resides in Carmel, California. She recently published Hydraulic Die Forming for Jewelers and Metalsmiths.

Reviews

Brilliant Stories: American Narrative Jewelry

Contemporary Crafts Museum
San Francisco, California
June 4 – July 24, 1994

by Mija Riedel

The eighty pieces of jewelry in "Brilliant Stories: American Narrative Jewelry" are rooted in autobiographical, cultural, and mythical narratives. The twenty-five artists represented draw upon diverse histories and backgrounds, yet there is a personal, intimate inclination which unifies the collection. Curated by Lloyd Herman, Director Emeritus of the Renwick Gallery, "Brilliant Stories" has its roots in earlier exhibitions, including "Good as Gold: Alternative Materials in American Jewelry" and more recently, "Tales and Traditions: Storytelling in Twentieth Century American Art."

The roots of narrative jewelry-making may be traced back through 19th century English mourning jewelry, with its hair lockets and funerary images, to European portrait miniatures and cameo portraits carved in ancient Rome, likenesses which captured the various virtues and vices associated with the person rendered. However, jewelry as social commentary appears to be a relatively new development, with few antecedents besides political buttons. The artists included in "Brilliant Stories" reflect on myths, cultural rites, and life in the last half of the 20th century, and render their ideas accessible on a daily basis by making them wearable.

This is an unusually thoughtful, thought-provoking assembly of work which interacts on multiple levels, invoking numerous, varied analogies among the pieces. The connections and distinctions allow each artist's work to be considered from several perspectives. For example, on a material level, Judy Onofrio's elaborately beaded, collaged brooches correspond to Joyce Scott's beaded neckpieces. Scott's large, beaded faces reference the collar of oxidized sterling faces in Laurie Hall's *Protesters*, alongside Thomas Mann's deathly silent *Endangered Species – Who's Next* focusing on animals, extinction, and the changing landscape; connecting again with Onofrio's *Mr. Earl*, honoring the arguably extinct American cowboy; which then points to myriad culturally and mythologically inspired works by Carolyn Morris Bach, Jaclyn Davidson, Hollie Ambrose and Wil M. Stubenberg, Eun Mee Chung, Ron Ho, Betsy King and Christina Smith. Each piece provokes interest in another and builds the momentum of the show; the resultant 'whole' is continually evolving, amplifying the sum of its parts.

The pieces interact by means of recurring themes, images, and a wide spectrum of materials. Oxidized sterling predominates, but it is combined with an array of dissimilar materials ranging from Plexiglas, found objects, newsprint, and cow bone to 18k gold, opals, and rubies. The majority of pieces are brooches, a number of which lodge in small shrines or stage settings when not being worn. There is no preponderance of archetypal symbols, but letters, boats, keys, and watch faces surface repeatedly.

Contemporary, culturally-inspired themes predominate. Mythological narratives are rivaled by the search for personal and cultural identity, journeys and rites of passage, the environment, existential and urban angst, coffee, childhood, Mom, and the passing of time. Judy Onofrio and Laurie Hall focus on Americana – Abe Lincoln, wide open spaces, and demonstrators respectively. Hall and Thomas Mann report on the pros and cons of caffeine culture. Mann laments vanishing elephants; Barbara Walter puts one in the circus in her *Three Ring Circus with Ringmaster Ring*, commenting, "For me, the acts with people were just to fill time; the animals were the stars." Jaclyn Davidson's pieces, incorporating animal protagonists as frequently as humans, are inspired by legends from around the world. Bruce Metcalf's *A Flower in the Wasteland* is a hilarious indictment of the insular academic world. Robin Kranitzky's and Kim Overstreet's beautifully constructed, haunting brooches relay poetic fragments of unconventional stories, as alluring in what they reveal as in what they suggest.

Ron Ho's eloquent, minimal, oxidized sterling necklaces unite the diversity of his life experiences – traditional Chinese ancestry, a multi-cultural childhood in Hawaii and art school in Seattle – through variations on the chair. Long noodles – representing long life – hang from a pair of chopsticks to a full plate resting on the chair seat below, commemorating the celebratory meal served for a Chinese child's *First Birthday*. A tea pot and two cups in *Yum Cha* refer to the highest form of hospitality a Chinese host may offer his guests. In *Vanished Wishes*, a jacket fixed with a small pink enamel triangle hangs casually from the back rest of the only chair in this group with a vacant seat. The piece is a memorial to all the "wonderful, creative individuals who have lost their lives in the AIDS epidemic."

Eun Mee Chung's work is the least representational and among the most poetic work exhibited. All of her pieces focus on Woman, frequently represented by traditional Korean symbols such as a rose or bird, facing an unfamiliar but necessary journey. David Williamson's *Mother's Day* brooch was made the year his mother died – "the first Mother's Day in memory that I had not made a present for my mother." *Clean Up Week*, incorporating a bright yellow and blue antique button with a bonneted woman in long skirts chasing off dirt with a stick, is topped with the child-like sterling silhouette of a house and

Harold O'Conner
Conference Time, 1991
18k, leather

anchored with a tiny sterling sheet of loose-leaf paper listing chores to be done. Roberta Williamson writes about her love for her daughter on silver leaf brooches while Alan Burton Thompson celebrates "...the strengths of women in the varied roles as mothers, lovers, leaders, and individuals" in *Genevieve's Decision*, made with a cameo, a compass, wood, silver, gold leaf, and a nail.

Harold O'Connor's 'timeless timepieces' are funny, provocative glimpses at our conceptions of time – how we have organized it and how it, in turn, organizes us. Figures of speech help to illustrate his ideas. O'Connor's *Serving Time* refers verbally to jailed convicts, but visually we are served a tiny sushi tray and miniature chopsticks on a table – all fabricated from precious materials. *Timeless Watch: Conference Time* is an 18 karat 'wristwatch' in which the numbers have been replaced with mini businesspersons seated at a round table, folios and drinks at hand; with no hour or second hands present to advance the meeting, it seems not only timeless but endless. *Timeless Watch: Neighborhood Watch* opens up to reveal two houses side by side, their occupants keeping a watchful eye on their property and each other. Kiff Slemmons's four hand brooches reflect Time's passing through the changing of the seasons. In *Winter: Cracked Ice* made from an enameled watch face and acrylic frosted to resemble ice, she captures the stalled, frozen character Time takes on when the days are short and the outdoors forbidding.

On a minor but significant note, the exhibit is beautifully designed. Originally intended for a foreign audience, there are brief, informal biographies about each artist as well as notes on each piece of jewelry, allowing the audience to compare not only materials, techniques, and visual content but reasons for making art jewelry, senses of humor, and purposes.

"Brilliant Stories" included the work of: Stephen J. Albair, Hollie Ambrose, Wil Stubenberg, Carolyn Morris Bach, Eun Mee Chung, Jaclyn Davidson, Susan Ford, Laurie Hall, Ron Ho, Betsy King, Robin Kranitzky and Kim Overstreet, Thomas Mann, Bruce Metcalf, Harold O'Connor, Judy Onofrio, Joyce J. Scott, Rhonda Shikanai, Kiff Slemmons, Christina Y. Smith, Alan Burton Thompson, Barbara Walter, David Williamson, Roberta Williamson, and J. Fred Woell

Sponsored by the United States Information Agency to correspond to the Year of American Craft, "Brilliant Stories" was designed specifically for the Mideast, the collection presenting an alternative to the long tradition of jewelry – particularly elaborate gold work – which flourishes in that region. The exhibit toured for one and a half years in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Pakistan, Egypt and Morocco – where one member of the audience felt compelled to comment in the guest book, "this is not real jewelry, it's only art".

"Brilliant Stories" is now touring the US. under the auspices of the International Sculpture Center. The 1995 itinerary includes the Headley/Whitney Museum in Lexington, KY, February 5 – March 19, with additional venues to be scheduled. For further information contact Tom Yarker at the I.S.C., Washington DC., (202) 785-1144.

Mija Riedel is a writer and metalsmith who lives in San Francisco.

Daniel Jocz
Breakfast, brooch, 1993
sterling, acrylic
Photo by Dean Powell

Brooch – The Subject

Tempe Arts Center
Tempe, Arizona
May 20 – July 31, 1994

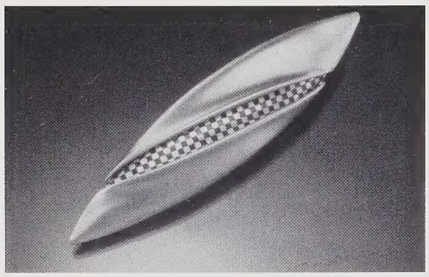
by Kristin Beeler

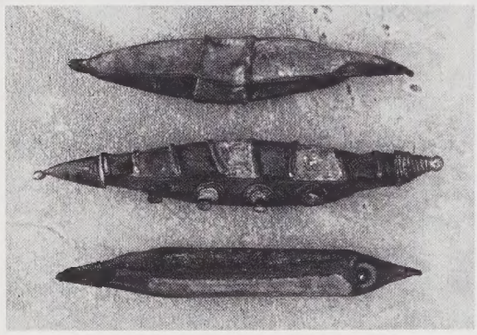
Every exhibition establishes its own community. Based on a common theme, a collection of works presents a cross-section of a specific time in the development of form or media. The community of 82 pieces from 55 artists which comprise "Brooch: The Subject" have in common the basic pin form. These are the modern heirs to the ancient fibula. In their selection, jurors David Pimentel and John Hayes sought originality, variety, and a level of commitment to craftsmanship. With an emphasis on variety, sufficient room was made to include new and unexpected pieces among the comfort of well-established and familiar names. Content and subject matter were not an issue since primary importance was placed on the diversity of approaches to the form and function of a brooch. Furthermore, because there were no limitations on media, the overall palette of the exhibition was significantly broadened by the introduction of fiber, ceramics, paper, plastic, and paint. Indeed, with so few restrictions on entries, it is surprising that "Brooch – The Subject" did not reveal a more varied community.

The exhibition sports many pieces which fit neatly into common genres of jewelry styles, though others excel in terms of technique, content, imaginative use of materials, or simply cleverness. Keith Belles's *Optical Illusion* face pin, for example, is made of recycled materials and has baby doll eyes that close when the piece is placed horizontal. Like Renee Harris's colorful embroidered pins, *Design and Coffee*, the work is basically just good, clean fun.

At least one quarter of the show is given over to unpretentious, well-designed pieces whose first goal is to be interesting or beautiful, yet serviceable objects. Carol Webb's *Banana Pins* are terrific fold-formed pins with patterns etched into laminated copper and silver. The marquis-shaped pod form isn't particularly new, but Webb has managed to put several of the classic metals workshop techniques to excellent use. Several objects reached out beyond good design into the realm of some obscure narratives. Theresa Levering-Brown's *Haven of Entrapment* hints at something other than its sweeping texture across a simple, triangular silver shield form. One piece that is impossible to forget is Robin Kraft's enigmatic *Flaw* in which a tiny bird's nest becomes the lens of a fabricated jeweler's loupe. Although these pieces are a little too obtuse to decode entirely, their combination of mystery and meticulousness makes it difficult to let go of their images.

Among the seven recipients of juror's awards were Deborah Lozier and Sarah Perkins, enamelists with extremely different approaches. Lozier's *Cocoon Series* of three pod-shaped, torch-fired enamel forms are rough, raw and practically uncivilized. But the burnt patterns of rust and ocher maintain the soft logic of natural forms and keep the pieces from becoming too out of control. Alternatively, Sarah Perkins's enameled *Tumer Brooch* is an exercise in restraint. The creamy white egg-like form has subtle, opaque, pale, yellows and blues with a few lines of copper. For those who can enjoy a sort of Abstract Expressionism, it is eye candy. The flawless, liquid control of color across the surface is something we recognize in the same way we recognize our own emotions and thoughts. It creates tangible forms for tacit realities. A second Perkins piece was far less successful. A combination of blocks of solid opaque color with roller-printed gold and silver, *Light Patch Brooch*, lacks most of the grace and intelligence of the artist's usual work. Whether a new direction or a temporary tangent, the piece has an anonymity that is uncharacteristic for her.





Top
Carol Webb
Banana Pin, brooch, 1993
etched copper over fine silver
¾ x 3 x ½"

Bottom
Deborah Lozier
Cocoon Series: animal, esteem, female,
brooches, 1993-4
enamel on copper, brass

Honorable mention in the enamels category, had there been one, would surely have gone to Cecelia Anne O'Kelley for *Thanksgiving Day Fireworks at Lake Guntersville.* The combination of transparent blue-gray enamel over forged silver makes a strikingly beautiful piece. O'Kelley has both the gift for creating vivid dreamscapes and the technical ability to seamlessly integrate the enamels with their mounting.

Another award was given to Daniel Jocz for his *Sketch Book Series –Tocoma, Italy.* Jocz, typically known for his semi-cybernetic jewelry, surprises his audience with two inspired little brooches that are made of acrylic paint directly on sterling. The metal is treated like heavy paper with shapes inside the painted landscape outlined by piercing and bending. The effect is one of absolute immediacy. Although metal has certainly been painted before, this particular union has a freshness that helps it evolve beyond the vanilla imagery of a landscape. The obvious question that arises is: "why use silver?" Is the preciousness of the material supposed to relate to the images painted on it? If so, how? If not, why use sterling? Or can it be that, as in Pre-Hispanic cultures of Central and South America, it is sufficient to know that there is precious metal underneath the paint without seeing it?

Others receiving Juror's Awards were Amy Linn and Jewell Clark. Linn's quizzical little brooch *Second Guess* is handsomely constructed with doors, latches, and pulleys. It has the appeal of an eccentric toy needing to be played with to be fully appreciated. Clark's *List Series* pins are four refrigerator-magnet sized notes which, for example, remind the viewer to: "break off affair – seek fulfillment – vacuum". Another reminds us that we need, " veggies – cheese – integrity – cat food – love – deodorant". The handwritten notes etched into silver are a smirking record of the same modern priorities that tell us to save the whales, be young, have fun, drink Pepsi. Like the transitory values to which they testify, the pieces are superficial one-liners. But good one-liners.

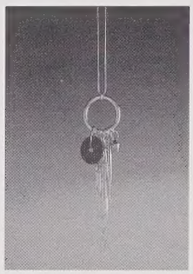
Two more awards went to Michael Croft and R. Jackson. Both artists use steel scraps and employ gold only for design accentuation and in findings. Croft's *Scraps* brooches, one of Damascus steel and granite polycast, the other Damascus with a stripe of transparent red acrylic, emanate a cool aloofness. The materials are bound into a tight formal arrangement with pristine craftsmanship that doesn't leave behind human marks. On the other hand, R. Jackson's three pieces *Implement, Radio Telluric,* and *Summer Night* have a slightly tortured, weather-roughened warmth. Sapphires, garnets, and tourmalines are added to the junk steel scrap but rust is kept for its expressive qualities and the implication of some unknown history.

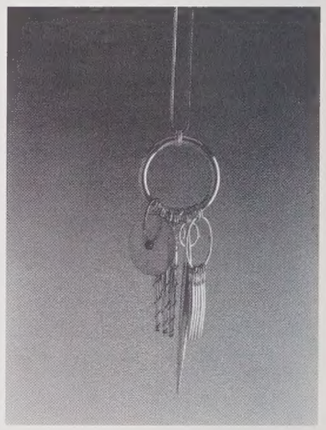
While most of the pieces in the show are of a traditional, wearable scale there are those that, with more or less success, address the issues of wearability. For example, Vernon Thiess's linear construction *City Whirl,* standing 15" tall, pushes the envelope to its tearing point. It is a fully three-dimensional diorama with a pin finding. To those who prefer slick, tidy craftsmanship, the piece has a neo-trampled look. If Eleanor Moty's work (also included in the exhibition) is uptown, then Thiess's work is inner-city. It's kernel grows from an attempt to capture the transient experience of life rather than from conforming to the solidity of 'proper' scale and craft. Taken to extremes, it might simply turn the body into a walking sculpture stand.

Similarly, David Griffin's pieces *Other Grass Rubberneckers* and *Which Way the Wind is Blowing* are nicely constructed brooches approximately 10" long hung on 12" bronze plaques. Like Thiess's piece, Griffin's works are fairly large, linear narratives in silver. However, Griffin divides the action of the 'story' into sections down the length of the brooch instead of having it take place in the round. Although they refuse to be mere accessories, the pieces seem like they could be worn without losing parts of the narrative.

There are probably as many ideas about what is essential to a brooch as there are people making brooches. While some are obsessed with constructing the perfect finding, others are interested primarily in surface treatment, and others still are conducting experiments in form. The object presents a different challenge to everyone who attempts it, dependent on the individual's personal program. "Brooch – The Subject" attempts to represent as many of these agendas as possible and while some connections to the central theme may sometimes seem looser than others, they all remain a part of the same community raising its own distinctive set of questions.

Kristin Beeler is a metalsmith living in Tucson, Arizona.





Left
Rachelle Thiewes
Reflections of St. Mary's, 1994
silver, 18k, coloration

Right
Rachelle Thiewes
Reflections of St. Mary's, 1994
silver, 18k, coloration

Rachelle Thiewes's New Work

Jewelers' Werk Galerie
Washington, DC.
October 9 – October 29, 1994

by Elizabeth Jones

Any exhibition of Rachelle Thiewes's jewelry fails to present one quarter of the work at all because besides the dominant silver and the accents of slate and gold, for this artist the most critical physical element in her work is the human body. Thiewes's pieces do not arbitrarily decorate the body like traditional jewelry which hangs, encircles, or perches upon the wearer as sculpture on a pedestal or pictures on a wall. Sometimes her work creates a geometric counterpoint to the organic curves of the body, restricting movement and demanding attentive manipulation. At other times, as in this show, the pieces correspond to the body's shapes and rhythms. The wearer achieves both an awareness of the artwork and a consciousness of their own body. "Society is moving so fast, we don't pay much attention to ourselves", Thiewes says. Her work demands that you slow down and pay attention. Above all, she doesn't want her jewelry to be passively worn, to be forgotten, nor does she want the wearer to forget herself. Thiewes's objects reflect the same enlightening objectives of performance art. According to Allan Kaprow: "The purpose of lifelike art [is] therapeutic: to reintegrate the piecemeal reality we take for granted. Not just intellectually, but directly, as experience... Of all the integrating roles lifelike art can play... there is none so crucial to our survival as the one which serves self-knowledge. You can't 'talk back' to and thus change an art-like artwork but 'conversation' is the very means of lifelike art, which is always changing" (*Artforum,* December 1983, pp.37-43). Thiewes's artworks are in constant conversation with the wearer and with the world.

The most successful pieces in the exhibition were seven necklaces entitled *Reflections of St. Mary's.* Hanging on long thin chains and pointedly positioned at pubic level, a heavy, silver circle supports a variety of shapes in a seemingly random order. The circle, disk, quill, and an occasional doubled cone shape form the basic vocabulary which the artist manipulates by changing scale, texture, relative position, and reflective surface. The intimate size of the Jewelers' Werk space magnified these pieces, something a larger space is often unable to do. A life size photograph of a model provided a dramatic field for displaying a single brooch.

The necklaces, when worn, rhythmically pendulate between the pelvic bones, when the wearer walks. The freely moving elements recall the gentle sound of a breeze playing a wind chime. The repetitive intersection of the body and the artwork serves as a constant reminder of the body's motion. The sound may even encourage the wearer to silence the piece, leading to a new discovery of the tactile pleasure inherent in the forms. The inspiration for these pieces derives from Thiewes's childhood memories of nuns who wore their rosaries from their belts. These rosaries swayed and punctuated the sisters movements as the crucifixes fell against their ankles. The peripubic placement of these necklaces, however, points to a sexual allusion more beholding to the bejeweled tummies of belly dancers.

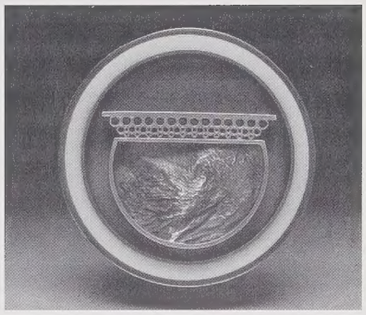
Four necklaces signal a new direction for Thiewes, away from sound and visual confrontation and toward silence and near invisibility. These almost ephemeral objects explore line and space through a long, thin chain, sparsely accented by the familiar, but now smaller, elements. By freeing the chain of heavier elements, Thiewes allows the line to take the shape of the wearer as it falls along the curving contours of the body. Although the intention here is good, the work still seems unresolved because the line overwhelmingly dominates the elements, leading to a kind of visual boredom. Also, because of its lightness the chain fails to adhere significantly to the curves of the body. Yet despite these difficulties, the serenity of these pieces may prove attractive for many wearers.

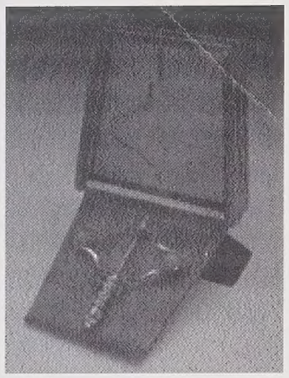
Three bracelets complete the exhibit. Each is constructed from a pleasingly weighed silver circle, which moves freely up and down the forearm. Subtle spikes alternate with fringe-like quills marrying the unlikely images of elegant charm bracelets and aggressive pit bull collars. In a world too much concerned with the visibility of the body, the artwork of Rachelle Thiewes brings us back to the body's most funda-mental, indeed, most primeval sense – the sense of touch. It also puts us in touch with ourselves and with our world.

Elizabeth Jones is an art historian and critic who teaches at the University of Texas, El Paso.

Left
Andrea Kennington
Ma Mere, brooch, 1993
sterling silver, 14K, 18K, citrine, rhodolite garnet, color Xerox

Right
Eleanor Thomas-Allen
Contemplation of Fun, pendant toy with box, 1992
nu-gold, niobium, sterling silver, hematite, lapis, imitation turquoise, walnut, ash
All Photos by Henry Stindt





Eleanor Thomas-Allen: Contemporary Artifacts

Andrea Kennington: Family Portraits

Community Council for the Arts,
Kinston, North Carolina
April 18 – May 15, 1994

by Biruta Erdmann

Placed together in the same exhibition space, the works of Eleanor Thomas-Allen and Andrea Kennington offer a wealth of cultural and personal information. Thomas–Allen's and Kennington's design of the installation – housing, placement, and spacing of the objects – made an effective use of the architectural space that created a compelling visual whole of ceremonial dimensions.

Thomas-Allen is an established jeweler, but her latest works (ten pieces) show a different agenda concerning the wearable object. While some of the pieces in the exhibition, such as the purse and the bracelets reveal the functional intent and artistic precedents readily, the "Contemporary Artifacts" display a marvelous sense of formal, functional and intellectual ambiguity. *Contemplation of Fun* is a beautifully crafted object of uncertain mythic/historic origins. Here the artist refashioned the concept of a mass-produced clacker toy into an elegant pendant/toy, which may fulfill more than one functional requirement. Thomas-Allen's penchant for the curvilinear forms associated with Art Nouveau characterizes this piece and several others in the exhibition. She successfully distills and recombines lines of the plastic toy into a shape that is as much Art Nouveau as it is Postmodern, or revisionist Pop.

Wayne's Shaving Brush might be understood as another update of a mass-produced, though now obsolete object. By using fiber optic cables for the brush and L.E.D. lights as gems within the handle of the brush, Thomas-Allen creates a futuristic looking object. The handle of the brush is decorated with etched and copper plated mathematical signs. The brush symbolically represents her husband, and the *Contemplation of Fun* functions as a metaphor for her son.

Unearthed Neckpiece, of clay and copper, is the largest and the most sculptural work in the exhibition. This shield-like, wall-mounted clay form, with its crusty surface and weathered edges, recalls archeological finds of ancient, magical charm. The title of the work suggests an object from the past, the form however, remains ambiguous. This imaginatively invented artifact explains the artist's thinking about artistic precedents, a sense of time, and historical identity. Perhaps, the artist does not wish to permit the viewer to discern the epoch or culture in which the maker or a wearer of the neckpiece lived.

For Kennington, whose artistic training is in the fiber arts, this was the first major exhibition of her achievement in metals. "I generally use collage type method in my metal work", said Kennington. The artist used the form of the medal in the creation of these nine brooch/portraits. Although, not visible from the front, the brooches have a mechanistic construction. Each brooch consists of three moveable and wearable sections. The end section of the brooch can be worn as a pendant. The wall mounted, wooden boxes in which each brooch is placed, are perfectly suited to hold 'the family treasures'. Though rather austere in design, the boxes contribute to the heraldic effect of the whole. These portraits reconnect Kennington with her roots and memories of relationships deepened over a lifetime.

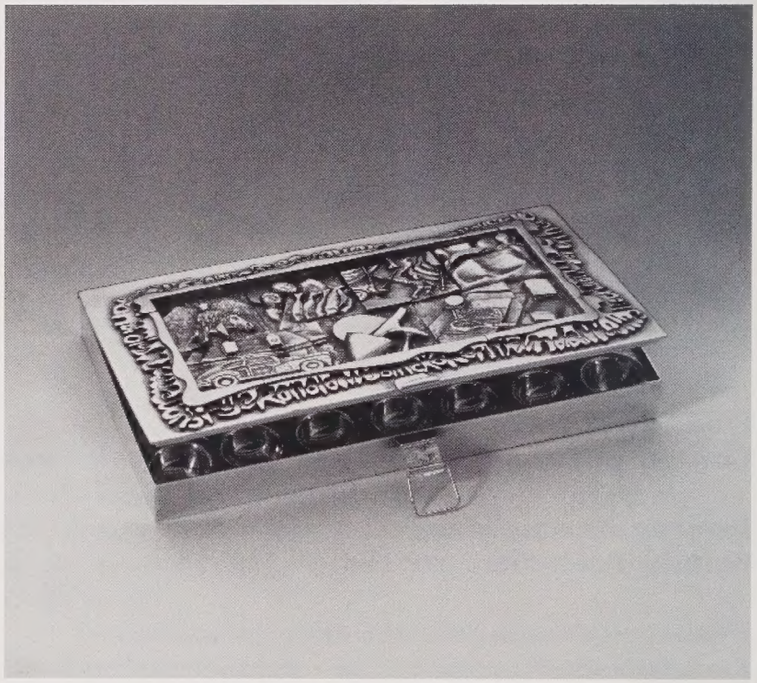
For *Ma Mere*, Kennington used the bee and a beehive motif to symbolically represent her grandmother as the head of "the family tree". This three-part brooch is a superb example of Kennington's handling of fabrication, casting, etching, and layering. An inlay of a reduced color Xerox of an old photograph completes this emblematic design. The hand-colored Xerox photos of the female images invoke an illusory sense of time – the Xerox photos of the men resemble tin-type likenesses. These portraits have roots reaching back to the nineteenth-century designs of birth and baptismal certificates and family records in the folk art of America.

Kennington's versatility and her background in fiber arts is demonstrated in her use of embroidery, beadwork, and fabric transfer. An embroidered centerpiece, featuring a bird in a landscape, forms a part in the design of her sister's portrait. An arrow-shaped beadwork ribbon connects the top and bottom section of her brother's portrait, establishing a symbolic tie of the richly ornamented surfaces with American Indian motifs. *The Traveler* is for Kennington's mother. Fabric transfer is used to create the map-shaped ribbon and references to travel, such as an automobile, an airplane and maps, play an important part in the characterization of the person and the relationships which the artist honors.

Self-Portrait concludes the series. Fish surround and frame the girl who seems to be looking back to her grandparents, parents, and siblings with a loving gaze. The use of the fish motif poetically expresses the artist's philosophical musings about her roots and aspirations. Kennington invites the viewer to share her personal experiences.

Biruta Erdmann is an Associate Professor Emeritus at the School of Art, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina.

Ronald Wyancko
Pill Box, 1994
sterling & fine silver, 14k



The Contemporary Silversmith

American Silver Museum,
Meriden, Connecticut
July 10 – Sept 9, 1994

by Bernard Bernstein

This exhibition, consisting of 32 works by members of the Society of American Silversmiths (S.A.S.) inaugurated the opening of the American Silver Museum.

The museum, housed in a tastefully-restored historic building, is in the center of Meriden. When fully operational the museum will have three floors, totaling about 15,000 square feet. It currently has a gift and book shop, a theater, educational activity center, video-viewing room, and space for temporary and permanent exhibits. Still in development are areas for craft demonstrations and workshops, a library/research center, and a growing collection of tools, silver objects, and archival materials relating to every aspect of silver.

Why Meriden? For over a century beginning in the 1800s and extending into the 1900s it was known as the "silver city". Meriden, Wallingford, and other local towns were at the heart of a region involved with the production of pewter, sterling, and silver-plated ware.

As for the museum's decision to showcase the work of the S.A.S., I can not think of a more appropriate choice. This organization, founded by Jeffrey Herman and based in Providence, has about 70 artisan members. The focus of their metalsmithing activities is directed at hollowware, flatware, sculpture, and what I will call "metaphorically functional" objects. Work submitted for all S.A.S.sponsored exhibitions must be at least 50% silver. So, the link between the museum's historical base and its mission and the activities and philosophy of S.A.S. is a strong and symbiotic one.

The educational background of the members of S.A.S. appears to be quite diverse. Most of the contributors are from the academic world, either teachers or past and present students. Some may have received training in non-university settings such as craft centers or workshops, and some may be self-taught.

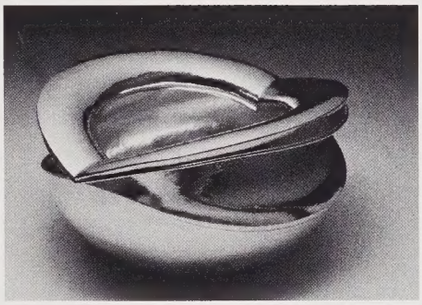
In general the orientation is in a different direction compared to the "art" objects often pictured in the articles and gallery ads in magazines like *Metalsmith* and *American Craft*. The objects in this show are mostly functional, with careful attention paid to traditional design concepts. Technical mastery is given a high priority. Many of the objects would be appealing to the sophisticated collector including pieces that fall into the category of sculpture. I'm thinking of Ronald Wyanko's sinuous spiculum-styled *Ramous*, Cynthia Eid's *Animal Anomaly* and Susan Ewing's meticulously-executed vessels, *Inner Circle Teapot 2* and *Penetrated Sphere*.

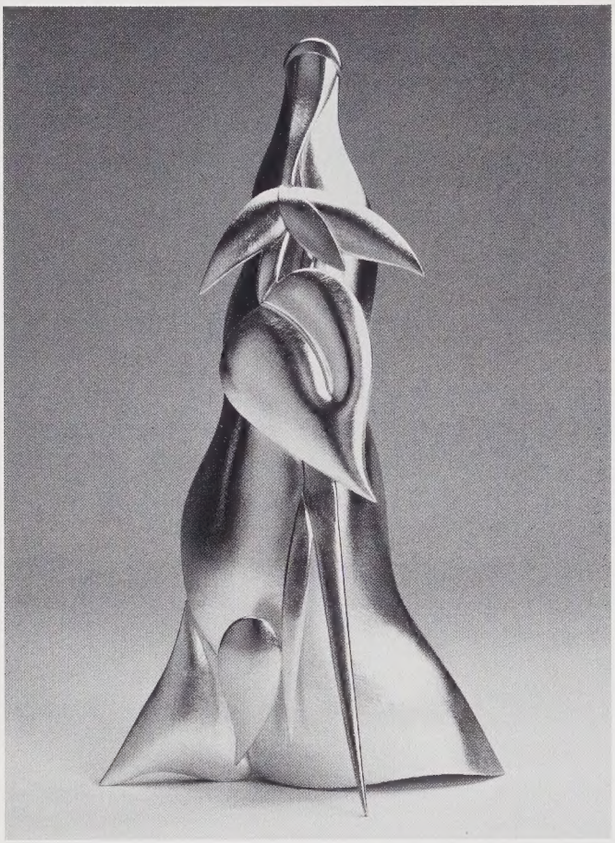
The exhibition is a cross-section of stylistic influences stretching from today to the distant past; elegant Scandinavian or modernist forms predominate. Some that stand out are Ronald Pearson's forged candleholders, Chunghi Choo's minimalist one-piece folded cake-server, Jack da Silva's ladle, John Cogswell's and Fred Fenster's Kiddush cups, Jeffrey Herman's Petit Fours server with two strategically-placed sapphire accents, Fred Miller's silver and ebony bowl, Harold Schremmer's standing cup, and Robert Oppecker's large tureen, whose execution follows his personal approach of assembling raised and cut-up units in different configurations to produce surprising intersections of edges and surfaces.

The post-modern, possibly Memphis-related look was represented by Thomas Muir's wire and sheet liquor cups, Boris Bally's *Cero Top* bottle-cork made up of silver, brass, ceramic and cork, his *Paved Spoon 4*, made of sterling and concrete; and Pauline Warg's finely-crafted tea strainer and drip cup. I am, however, having trouble understanding why Bally would make a serving spoon with a massive concrete and silver handle terminated by a disproportionately small bowl.

Left
Robert Oppecker
Tureen, 1990
sterling
8 x 13 x 15"
Photo by R. Oppercker

Right
Sue Amendolara
Cascading Foliage, 1994
sterling, 24k foil
8 x 4 x 2"
Photo by Dennis Ryan





Pre-modernist influences were reflected in Harold Rogovin's immense oval punch bowl and ladle, and Henry Petzal's *Bowl # 94*, featuring a line of shallow bosses with incised borders running around the circumference.

I'm not sure whether this is a phenomenon that is more pronounced in jewelry than in hollowware, or that the pendulum has begun to swing away from content-loaded objects that tell stories or make statements, but I noticed very few examples of the narrative approach. Four objects of this type attracted my attention and represent what I will call an attempt to integrate form, function, and content. Olle Johanson, who seems inclined toward small, simple bowl-forms exhibited one which had a V-shaped section cut out of its side, starting at the rim, which made the piece look as if it was splitting apart. Inside, resting on the bottom, was a copper representation of a broken hammer and sickle. The title, *New Era,* helped to end any doubts about the symbolism, though its use exacted the price of undermining function.

More functional and more complex was a candle-snuffer by Marilyn da Silva, entitled *Put Out The Fire.* It is a wheeled cart with a long tree-branch-shaped and textured handle. A crouching rabbit in the cart looks longingly at a carrot at the far end of the handle. Is the content arbitrary or is there some conceptual connection between the "carrot on a stick" theme and the act of candle-snuffing?

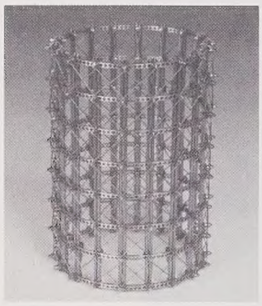
I am also including Sue Amendolara's *Cascading Foliage* scent bottle in this category. This is a sensuous and complex construction of concave and convex surfaces suggesting a female figure faced with applied, leaf-shaped units.

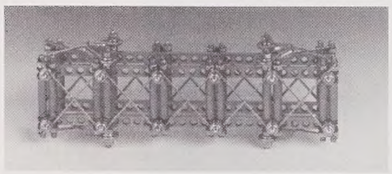
Ronald Wyancko's pill box, in particular commanded much of my interest and admiration. It is a utilitarian, straightforward, flat, rectangular box with a hinged lid covering 28 hemispherical compartments which hold, I would guess, a weeks worth of pills to be taken four times a day. Much of the artistry, artisanry, content, and spiritual significance are contained in the design of the lid. Most of the space is occupied by a rectangular frame with an intricately sawn border, surrounding eight differently-proportioned rectangular plaques. Each plaque is an image in relief of some object or situation that probably has personal meaning for the person taking the pills. For instance, there is a ping-pong table, two figures on opposite sides of a bed under a blanket, an antique car parked in front of a house, and other images as well.

Compare this to the plastic medication-organizers available in drug-stores. What Wyancko has made is similar to Cogswell's and Fenster's Kiddush cups. The religious ritual of reciting a blessing and drinking wine at the beginning of the Sabbath can just as easily be done with a plastic cup, but the Psalmist wrote: "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness", which encourages us to enhance the performance of a ritual with special meaning through the use of a beautiful, precious ritual object. Having to take medication several times a day every day is an important quality-of-life ritual and Wyancko has elevated that ritual from what might be an annoying inconvenience to a semi-sacred level by creating a beautiful ritual object in precious metal, that contains personally meaningful iconography. This object successfully integrates form, content, function, materials, and skill.

The American Silver Museum and S.A.S. have collaborated to celebrate the museum's birth with a fine exhibition. I look forward to the many that are sure to follow.

Bernard Bernstein is a writer living in Bronx, New York





Top
Zack Peabody
Object 1196, 1994
stainless steel, niobium,
cold connected
4¼ x 4¼ x 5⅝"

Bottom
Zack Peabody
Brooch 280, 1992
stainless steel, niobium,
cold connected
3 x 1 1/16 x ⅝"
All Photos by Karen Bell

Zack Peabody: The Structures of Denial

Jewelers' Werk Galerie
Washington. DC.
June 16 – July 7, 1994

by Claire Dinsmore

Since the advent of the machine age in the eighteenth century, the idea that either philosophy or technology hold sway in realms of human endeavor is one which has been posited countless times. Yet is not the impetus for both the same? In Martin Heidegger's essay *The Question Concerning Technology* the realms of philosophy and technology are brought together in the form of the one in deep contemplation of the other. The link forging itself between the two is the *way* in which they are both explored: that way being questioning, thinking, ruminating. This *way* is the 'essence' inspiring technology, and its manifestations is a flexing of the muscles of human prowess.

In Zack Peabody's first solo exhibition of jewelry and small sculpture on view at Jewelers' Werk Galerie in Washington, DC., these extremities are explored with almost intimidating intensity. The works themselves utilize the elements of a visual language that appear well versed in the constructs of engineering and mechanics. The pieces are constructed of, literally, hundreds of small parts that either boggle the mind via their complexity, or tire it with their seemingly infinite repetition. The application of the *will to mastery* is evinced here with rather astounding concentration on what appear to be tiny machines, and therein lies the contradiction: what is the function?

Mechanics imply kinetic workings, motion, doing. In Peabody's works the state is that of extreme stasis, iterated by their definite solidity. This negates the factor of use that is generally a given in machines. One could suppose that these works are simply manifestations of Peabody's aesthetic, or argue that wearability is a *use.* However, it is clear such simplicity of mind did not create these small technical wonders; these works are out to prove something.

The wearability factor is obviously unimportant to Peabody. He makes this fact quite clear by not mentioning it, or the concept of the body as portable gallery, even once in his "Artist's Statement" (an integral part of the show I believe). Peabody himself denies that these works are the visual manifestations of a philosophy (or at least the concept of philosophy swathed in the notion of the abstract which is, of course, the antithesis of the exactitude and order which informs this work). Nevertheless, these pieces are not *about* jewelry, or *about* the body, nor are they the purveyors of an aesthetic. They are *about* their inner meaning. Heidegger would say that they are ways of 'revealing', sensuous forms carrying a message about human ability: our ability to create, to understand, and to order, to think, and to rationalize. These are forms with which to evince the glory, as it were, of human cognition and the triumph of human control in the midst of nature's chaos, structures in direct opposition to the power of the elements. They are the embodiments of a form of weaponry, that weapon being *denial.*

"Like radio towers rising against the countryside, they defy the natural, the random." Peabody's statement sets the tone. His use of corrosion resistant materials to defy the erosive natures of time's passage is "...an attempt at immortality...", as if fixing the impress of his existence, his small slice of time, with a voice strong and resonant enough to withstand time's heedless ravages.

Yet machines fall into disuse as they are superseded by humankind's ever increasing knowledge and ability. Although the drive in technology is one of the *will to power,* ultimate control over the elusive forces of nature and the sustenance of the species, it has no concern with the individual.

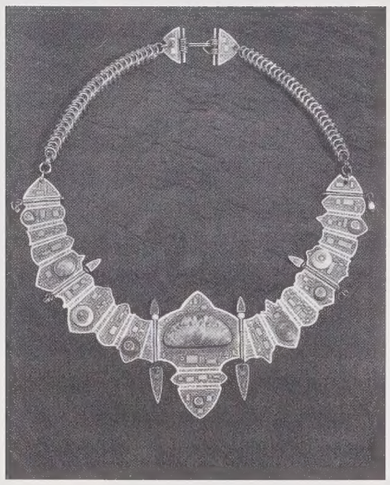
All English words formed around the base of *tech* (such as "technology") stem from the Greek root *teks* meaning "art". It seems the spirit of etymology played the divine role of muse here. By bringing the language of technology into the realm of art Peabody shifts the focus from one that, although bearing humankind's unmistakable imprint, avoids the individual via the anonymity engendered by sheer mass. He then humanizes that language even further by bringing the work into the small and intimate realm of jewelry.

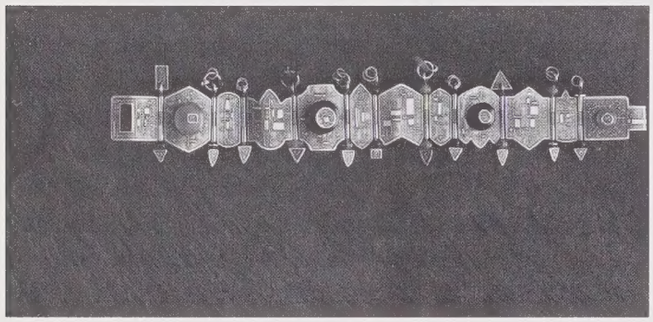
Upon an initial viewing it would appear, perforce, that this work is not *expressive.* The impulse which inspired it is the same as that which drives many machinists, architects, metalsmiths, mechanics, engineers, etceteras (they are often referred to as "tech-heads"). The drive is *not* that which is found to be the chief inspiration (as Kant would say) of many an artist: the longing towards the *sublime,* but instead the needs of the human ego. Peabody's work *expresses* such needs sincerely, and what better way to voice them than through the (seemingly) invincible material of metal?

Claire Dinsmore is a writer who lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

Top
Kris Patzlaff
Untitled, necklace, 1994
silver, 18k, 24k, crazy lace agate,
horn, bone
approx. 18" long

Bottom
Kris Patzlaff
Untitled, bracelet, 1993
silver, 18k, 24k, black & yellow horn
7 x 1"





Kris Patzlaff: New Work

Mobilia Gallery
Cambridge, Massachusetts
June 4 – July 30, 1994

by Jan Baum

Meticulously crafted and poised, the work of Kris Patzlaff beckons and entices its viewers. This jewelry, composed of thin intaglio panels of oxidized sterling silver with details of semi-precious stones and high karat gold, is earnest in approach.

The various patterns on the framed intaglio panels allude to hieroglyphic writing, they seem to want to tell us something. Each panel is dense with patterns reminiscent of maps, aerial views of cities, city plans, circuit boards, and conglomerations of directional symbols and doodles. A few of these patterns also recall contemporary graffiti artists such as Keith Haring, though Haring's marks are representational while Patzlaff's are non-representational, linear, and more ambiguous.

The jewelry balances on delicate lines. It is sober in its limited color scheme, the arrow-like protrusions which seem to protect the wearer, and the solidity of its appearance. At the same time, the work is playful and inviting with its dangling adornments and the doodle-like quality of some of the patterns, even the edges of the arrow forms are rounded and non threatening. Each element and panel is connected with a hinge which allows for movement, which is always smooth and elegant and in concert with the body. The weight and size of all the work is just right, neither too light nor too heavy to be worn, physically present though never encumbering. The work falls within the historical traditions of jewelry.

The most prevalent feature of Patzlaff's pieces is earnestness, arrived at through the artist's sensibilities and aesthetic. A great deal of information is communicated formally. The seriousness and sobriety of the work comes through the limited color scheme, oxidized silver and gold detail, the solidity of the consecutive panels, and the meticulous craftsmanship. The work has life beyond this sobriety with flecks of color and the enticing, dangling ornaments. A sense of purpose comes through its functional wearability, its patterns which seem to bear information, and the attention to details such as the intaglio printed rivet heads. This attention to detail says this work is important enough to take care of all of the finest points of ideas, intent, and construction.

The shapes of the individual panels do not seem to point to any specific significance, though the combination of these slightly curved, tightly joined panels create a solidity that seems shield-like and protective (especially considering the arrow-like elements). Central panels, dangling elements, and rivet details, are all framed and the pattern is raised suggesting plaque-like associations and acting as a further signal that there is information or something of significance here, however, what that information is remains provocatively unclear.

The work is intentionally ambiguous. It is made in response to the artist's questions and personal inquiries. In a statement, Patzlaff says she wants her work to address the "mysteries of humankind" and that she "strives for the same ability 'primitive cultures' have...to touch a part of us we are all trying to understand." Some unanswered questions remain, however. Which mysteries of humankind is the artist addressing? Are there more specific ways of addressing individual "mysteries" that may produce more meaningful work? Which part is the "part of us that we are all trying to understand." Is turning to 'primitive culture' as a means of addressing these issues appropriate?

This work is not confrontational or statement-oriented. Rather it is rather quiet and waits to be discovered and upon discovery, it is intriguing, impressive, and seductive. And even considering my questions and challenges, I still wanted to wear this jewelry. And isn't that the sign of no small success?

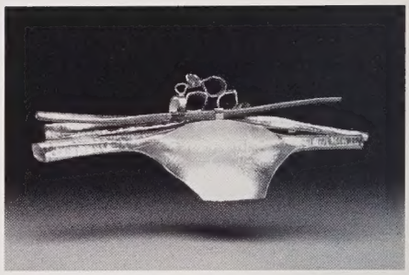
Jan Baum is a metalsmith who has recently moved to Portland, Oregon.

Clockwise

Mary Lee Hu
Neckpiece #9, 1973
fine & sterling silver, 24k, 12k filled
brass, pearls, wrapped, looped, and
woven

Timothy Lloyd
Untitled, brooch, 1993
sterling silver, shibuichi, copper, 18K gold

Helen Shirk
Sustaining Spirit VI, 1992
copper, patina, prisma color
19 x 19 x 9"



Contemporary Metalsmithing: Behind & Beyond the Bench

The Gallery at Craft Alliance
St. Louis, Missouri
June 10 – July 23, 1994

by Noel Leicht

This rich sampling of work from the current American metalsmithing community demonstrated a dynamic breadth of creativity, diversity, and craftsmanship. The 25 artists invited by Curator Joe Muench to participate in "Contemporary Metalsmithing: Behind & Beyond the Bench" expressed themselves in myriad ways: holloware, jewelry, swords and knives, functional utensils, sculpture, narrative wall hangings, even toys. Their willingness to explore new techniques and to experiment with changing styles was a poignant statement of the artistry that has enriched metalsmithing in the last three decades.

Muench planned this exhibition from the perspective of a metalsmith and an educator. He wanted his students at Craft Alliance as well as the community-at-large to understand what happens technically and intellectually during the creative process. He shunned vague artist statements and critiques and asked the participants to directly address their goals, inspirations, influences, styles of expression, technique, artistic development, and aspirations. He requested works about which the artists were most passionate and/or pieces that they considered 'landmarks' in their technical or artistic development.

Viewers were privileged to see many older works still in the artists' possession that are usually only seen in metalsmithing publications, among these 'landmark works' were: Betty Helen Longhi's 1960 *Ladle for a Left Handed Lady;* Brent Kington's 1965 fantasy toy, *Air Machine;* Mary Lee Hu's intricately woven 1973 bird-like, *Neckpiece #9;* Jon Havener's 1973 Stretched Asymmetrical Bowl; Bill Fiorini's 1974 *Figurative Hair Comb;* Chunghi Choo's 1982 electroplated *Peace Lily;* Richard Mawdsley's masterpiece of fabricated tubes, *Medusa;* and Joe Wood's 1986 *Black Halex Neckpiece;* of ping pong balls; among others.

Muench's premise and execution were thoughtful and well planned. The landmark pieces from the sixties and seventies were juxtaposed with current work by the artists. Mounted on neutral linen backgrounds in simple museum vitrines and wall cases, the works were displayed with a variety of collaborative materials: original working sketches, work-in-progress photographs, artists' remarks, personal memorabilia, and several (tasteful) promotional pieces.

Interspersed throughout the exhibit were also photos of the artists, a glossary of metalworking terms and, for viewers unfamiliar with metalwork, poster-sized photographs depicting common metalsmithing techniques; not too much detail – just enough collateral texture and color to enlighten and satisfy a viewer's curiosity.

Individual booklets which contained commentary, pertinent background information, and review information from the artists about their careers and the exhibited work offered visitors provocative and virtually direct personal dialogue with the artists. The cover of each booklet featured a photo-copied hand of the artist, which for Muench defined the artist since "...the hand is a major tool of the metalsmith."

When the works of the 25 artists were studied as a whole, it was evident that an enormously influential and fruitful network exists within this artistic community. Subtle influences and interactions on many levels have created a visual glossary of styles and techniques – interacting, converging, synthesizing, and diverging – that result in a fascinating progression of process and expression.

The sleek, pristine lines of Scandinavian design of the fifties and sixties seen in works by Heikki Seppä and John Marshall are echoedin Betty Helen Longhi's vessels and Chungi Choo's electroformed shapes, but with different nuances and aesthetic goals.

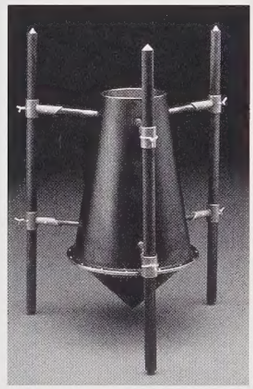
Colockwise

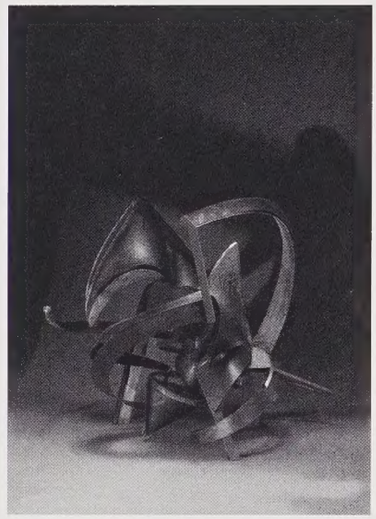
Bill Fiorini
Untitled, pendant, 1978
sterling silver, pearl, citraine, copper/kurmido, mokame gane

Timothy Lloyd
Untitled, brooch, 1982
reticulated silver, titanium, delrin, sterling

Jon Havener
Calypso, 1988
steel, bronze, copper

Boris Bally
Tripod Vessel, 1988
oxidized Brass, gold plated silver rivets, concrete filled





Mokame gane is seen in Chuck Evans's early jewelry and also in John Marshall's current abstract hollowware form; Philip Baldwin and Bill Fiorini use a similar process in their blade making. Brent Kington pushed traditional black-smithing techniques to create sculptural forms; his influence is seen in the sculptural forgings of Rick Smith and Jon Havener.

Experimentations with colored and patinaed finishes were prevalent in the exhibition. Helen Shirk introduced subtle surface color to her spun and hammered copper bowl with prisma color pencils. Chungi Choo featured a riot of brilliant hues in her anodized aluminum brooches. Betty Helen Longhi incorporated reflective color in her seductive niobium and silver vessel form. Responding to the colors and textures of western landscapes, Timothy Lloyd incorporated soft luminous color in his small sensuous brooches, while Billie Jean Thiede experimented with surface treatment and patina on her formed copper teapot.

Boris Bally's recycled 'decayed' found objects push the limits of his jewelry and sculpture. David LaPlantz's work found inspiration in decoration, politics, and current events. Besides investigating surface treatments, color, and patination, Joe Wood indicated his interest in metal pieces as significant cultural objects. Lucinda Brogden narrated incidents of her life in traditional repousséd bronze wall plaques.

Several metalsmiths reflected on history for inspiration. Thomas Muir worked figurative shapes into a tazza, a historical metal form. Jim Malenda exhibited his first experiment with free standing Stations of the Cross. Bill Fiorini referenced Japanese, Native American, and European designs for his patterned mosaic damascus knives.

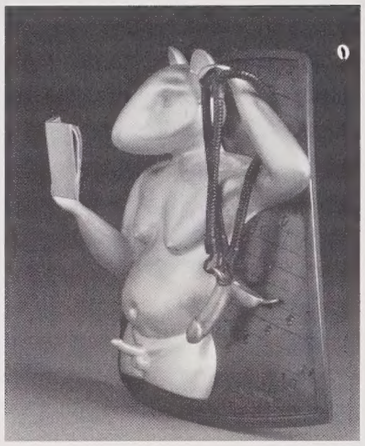
Concern for form continued to be a main focus: Susan Hamlet's jewelry illustrated her ongoing evolution from industrial to figurative forms. In a two-dimensional photographic display, Rachelle Thiewes demonstrated how her sculptural jewelry designs relate to body form and motion. Several Daniel Jocz rings explored traditional adornment as sculptural forms. Brigid O'Hanrahan's vessels highlighted fabricated forms of mysterious double wall construction. Chuck Evans's tipped sake server played with his present interest in the off-balance illusion of functional pieces. Jon Havener attempted to connect the past and present with dimensional compositions that control space, form, surface, and visual movement. Mary Lee Hu's stunning twined and fabricated gold choker incorporated more forms of negative space than her past work.

"Contemporary Metalsmithing: Behind and Beyond the Bench" was an exceptional opportunity to explore the past, present, and the future of contemporary metalsmithing and to contemplate the dynamic artistic and technical development of individual metalsmiths. As an informative, introspective exhibit, it paid tribute to the creative talent, discipline, and the generous exchange of ideas within the metalsmithing community today.

Noel Leicht is a metals artist and writer from St. Louis.

Left
Keith Lewis
Building Self, pin, 1994 (Frontal view)
silver, 24k plate, wooden ruler
3⅜ x 2⅜"

Right
Keith Lewis
Building Self, pin, 1994 (Reverse view)
silver, 24k plate, wooden ruler
3⅜ x 2⅜"



The Telling of Stories: Narrative Jewelry and Fiber

The Society of Arts and Crafts
Boston, Massachusetts
August 6 – September 11, 1994

by Julia Jiannacopoulos

To narrate is to recount, report or relate something like a story or a tale. This highly diverse exhibition of narratives functioned on many levels and successfully presented socio-political commentary, elicited personal introspection, and considered aspects of human spirituality. Curator Gail Brown, a Philadelphia writer and private crafts dealer, invited: Candace Beardslee, Keith Lo Bue, Enid Kaplan, Keith Lewis, Elizabeth Chenoweth Palmer, Beverly Penn, and Rhonda Shikanai to participate. The imagery ranged from the Disneyesque, as in Shikanai's work, to the historical in Penn's, to the revelatory and confrontational in Palmer's and Lewis's brooches. In addition to traditional precious materials, materials such as insects, animal and human hair, century-old newspapers, and maps found their way into the work in a credible and refreshing manner.

There is a certain naiveté and looseness in the work of Elizabeth Chenoweth Palmer, Keith Lo Bue, and Enid Kaplan. These qualities allowed the poetics, history, and associations of the materials to facilitate the narrative. This was prominent in Palmer's rather large pins (3¾" – 5½") which included both precious and non-precious metals juxtaposed with feathers, stones, glass, and maps. In *Getting On Down The Road* and *Man With A Bird On His Head* her unique iconography combined child-like renderings of menacing adult figures with images of small children. These images manifest a child's experiences of physical, mental, and emotional abuse and the viewer can imagine these works as highly charged drawings done in therapy to facilitate a child's healing. The thought of wearing these 'badges' forces the viewer to re-consider the images, messages, and implications and then to determine if one possesses the courage to confront the world wearing such statements.

Keith Lo Bue's constructions appeared greatly indebted to the work of Joseph Cornell, complete with marbles, until one viewed his jewelry. Collectively and appropriately entitled *Oddments*, the works lure viewers into a diminutive diorama through the maneuvering and motion of the 'trappings' inside the jewelry. The interiors captivate and disturb and the objects must be fondled to be experienced. The brooch format allows one to possess and wear a tiny environment full of fragments and metaphors for time, place, and memory

Due to her knowledge of the meaning of gemstones and her interest in a 'primitive' aesthetic, Enid Kaplan was an easy choice for this show. Her extensive knowledge of materials and their symbolism is impressive but does it successfully convey her intentions in the work? Does the work need the support of the text to validate the use, placement, and relevance of materials? This viewer also questions her offer to sell parts of a work separately from one another, as in *Water Weaver.* Is it credible to offer to sell an amulet separately if it is displayed in a meaningful, sculptural environment?

As in many exhibitions, there were artists who stood apart from the group. The integrity involved in the concepts behind both Keith Lewis's and Beverly Penn's work is indicative of the thought process of the makers. In Lewis's new work, *Building Self* and *Well Doug...Its 36 now,* he reveals human inadequacies and liabilities using the symbolism of a man depicted as a mouse and a dog respectively. In *Building Self,* four beautifully detailed 'strap-ons' framed on the back of the brooch added an element of sardonic humor that could be either self-referential or serve as a social metaphor. The idea of 'two-sidedness' in both brooches augments the dual meaning and invites viewer's introspection. This duality of image and idea also relates to Beverly Penn's *Venus and Veneration* series. Her iconoclastic approach to the depiction of women throughout art history, engages the viewer conceptually, holds them formally, and follows them home metaphorically. The *Veneration* series references the spiritual and private intimacy of altars and niches. This combination of architectural spaces, natural forms, and milagros (miracles) represent the desire to return absent body parts to familiar, female icons. These brooches also pose questions for viewers regarding nature versus culture. While the two series shared similar historical content the *Veneration* series appeared more intrinsically cohesive.

With its broad range of narrative styles "The Telling of Stories: Narrative Jewelry and Fiber" succeeded in being a well-attended and worthwhile exhibition. If the level of content in the work of the selected artists had been consistent throughout, this show would have been ranked in the realm of the exceptional.

Julia Jiannacopoulos is a metalsmith who lives and works in New Bedford, Massachusetts

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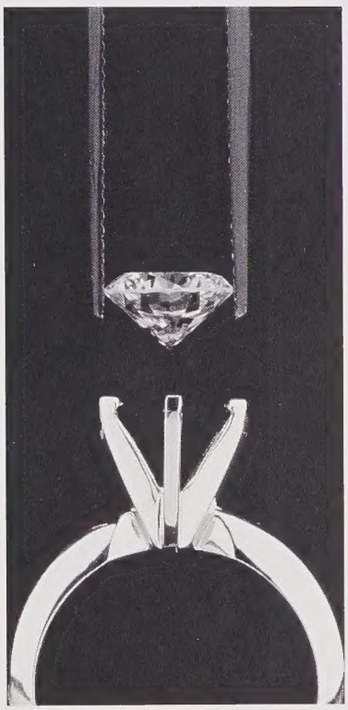

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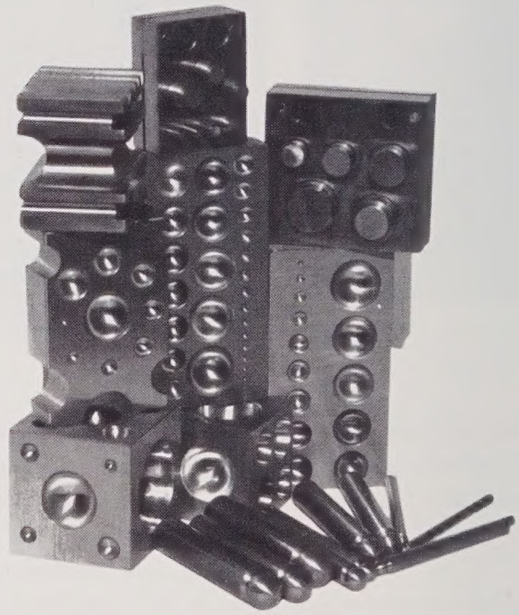

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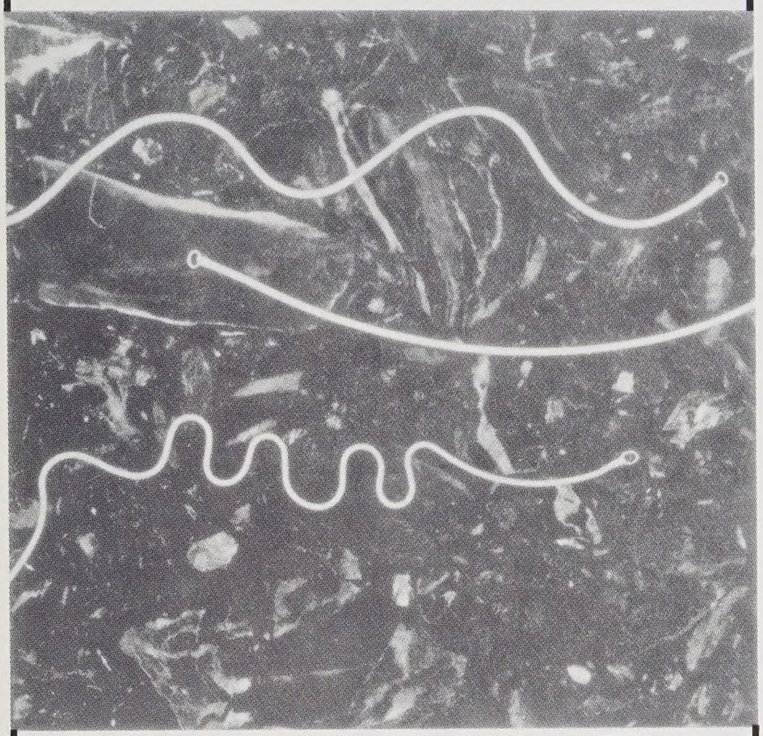

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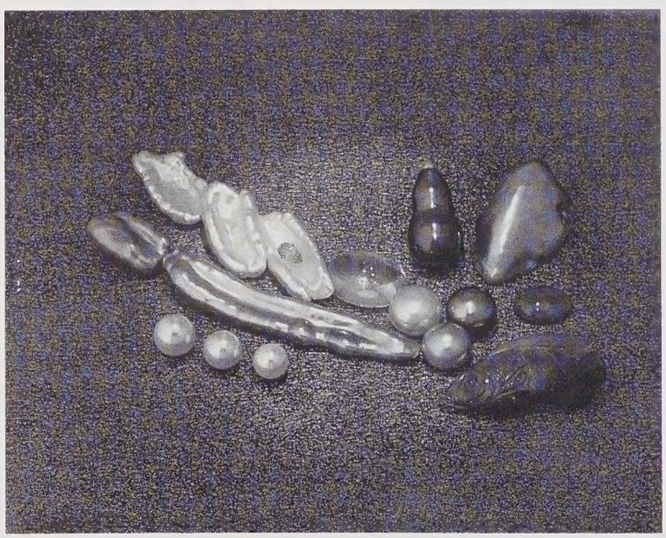

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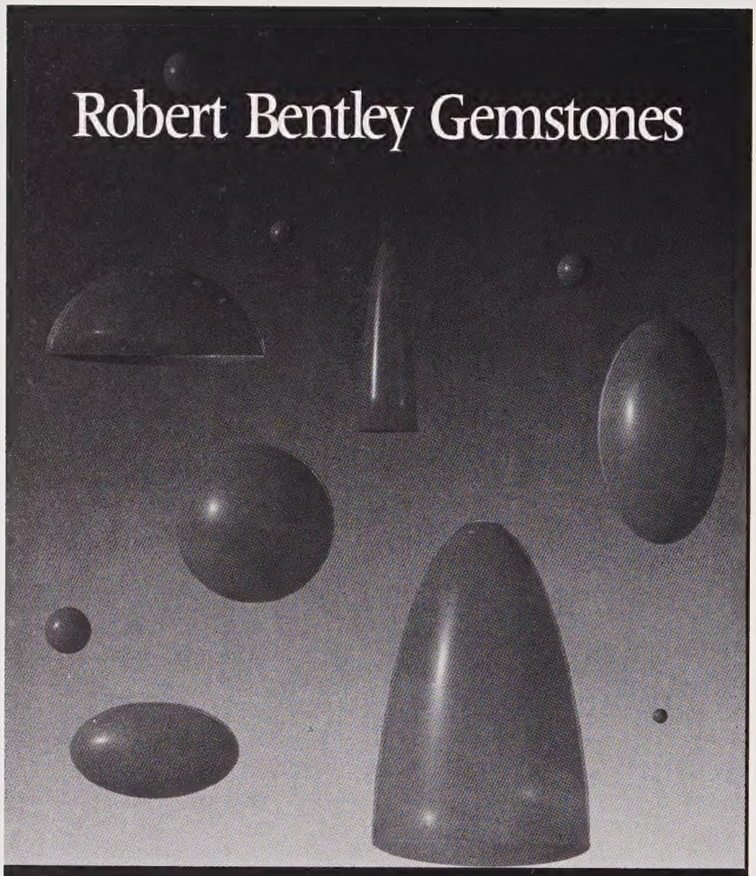

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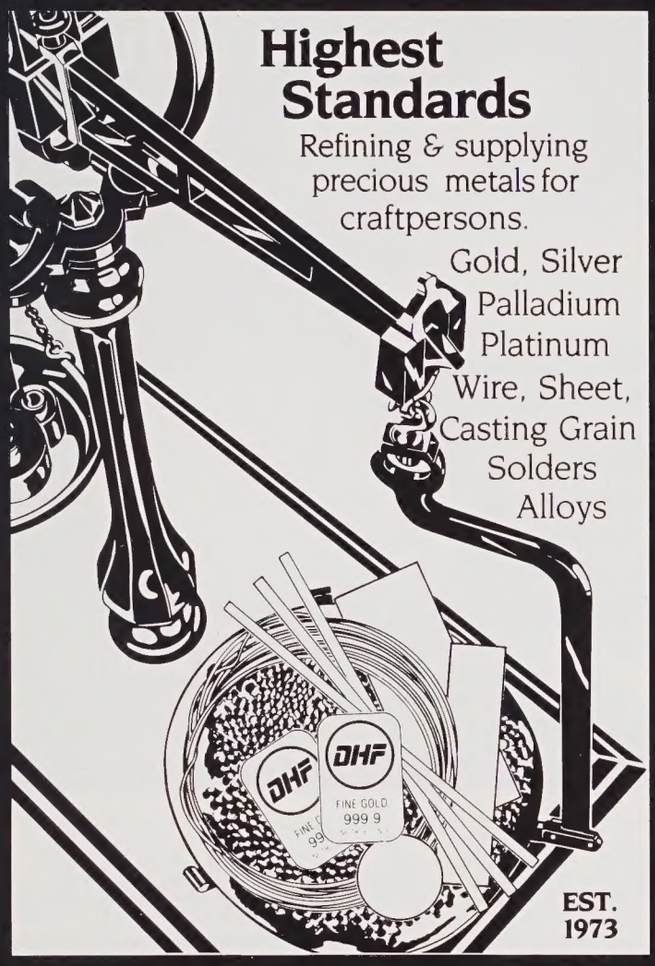

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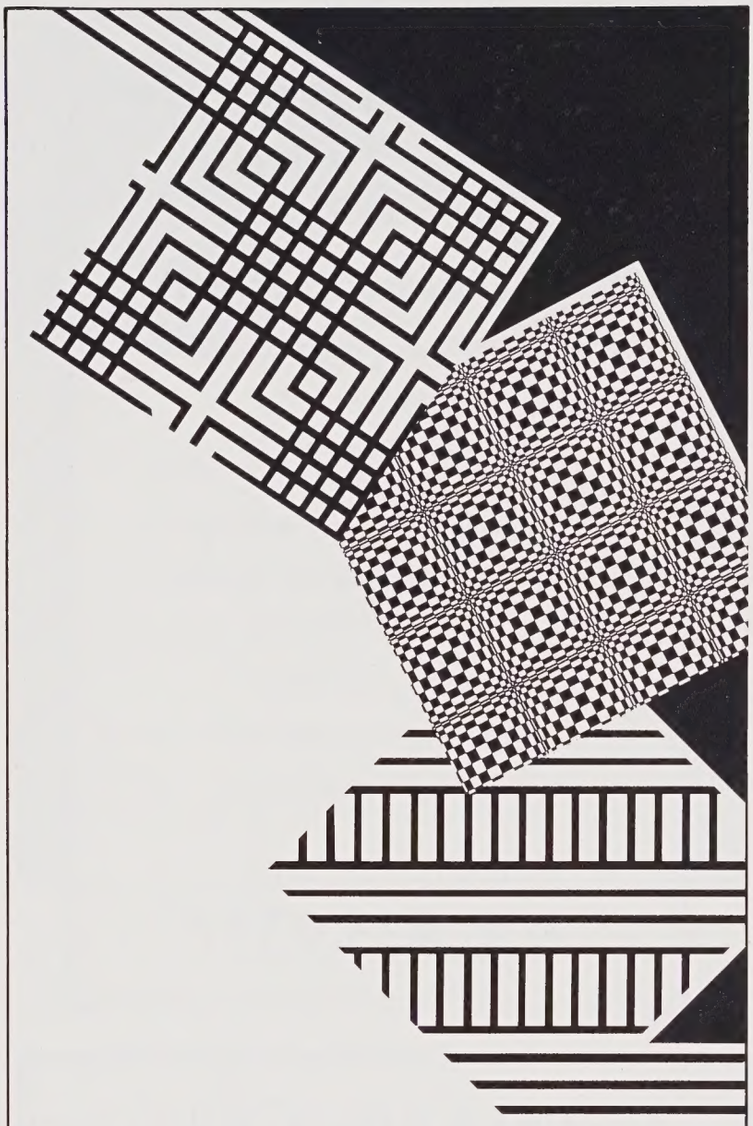

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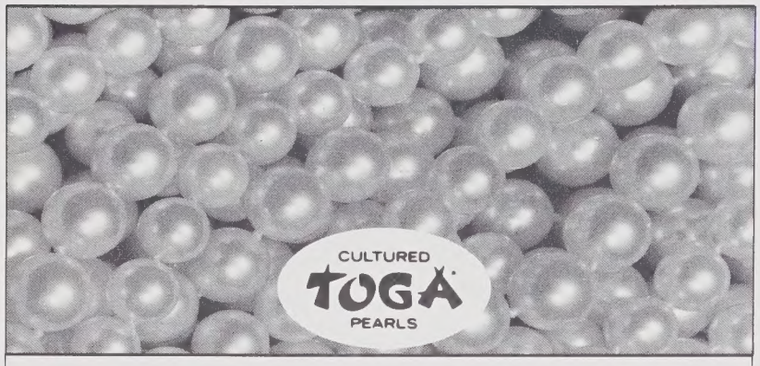

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April 9-11, 1995
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The Exhibits

View more than 250 supplier exhibits including findings, machinery, jewelry finishing, packaging and displays, office techniques and computer programs — all the latest technology and services for the costume jewelry manufacturer. Also for the first time, a unique new product showcase.

The Seminars

Our seminars for the costume jewelry manufacturer will offer insights and perspectives of industry experts. Subjects include quality assurance, metals, fashion trends, management and marketing innovations. Call for complete seminar program.

The Social Events

Expo Providence kicks off lavishly with the Association's Annual Banquet on April 8 in the ballroom of the Convention Center. Enjoy a wonderful event with opportunities to greet old friends, make new industry friends and meet industry leaders.

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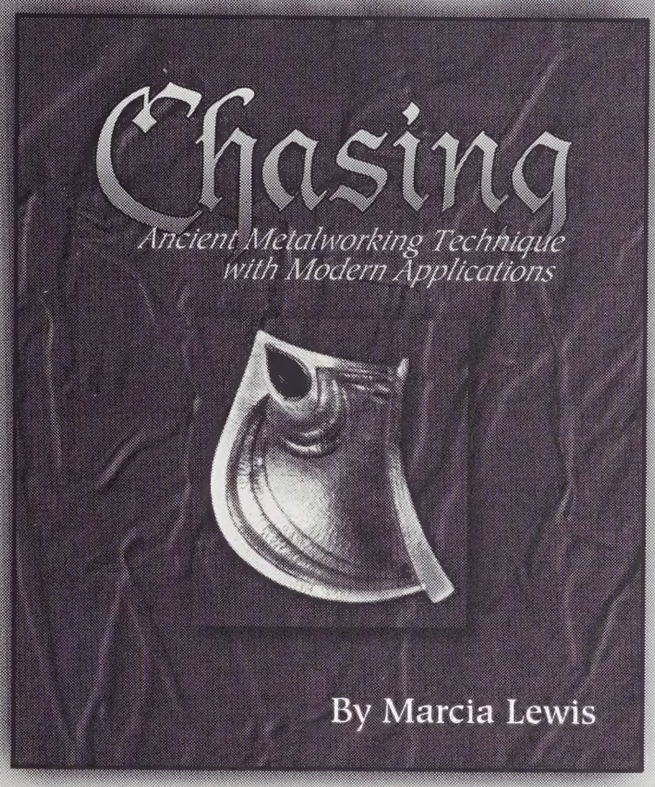

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EXHIBITIONS: **Arlodante** - "The DeLuna Series: New Enamels by James Carter": **Gallery I/O**: "Contemporary Jewellery; American • European • Australian" - selected works: **Thomas Mann/Gallery I/O**: "Double Vision" curated by Bob Ebendorf and Thomas Mann: **Le Mieux** - "Ken Cory: The Best of 30 Years": **Mignon Faget Ltd.** - "Magion Faget: Objects of Adornment": **Rhino Gallery** - "Selected Work by Members of the Society of Louisiana Artists in Metal (SLAM)": **Symmetry** - "Enamels and Hand Engraving".

SPECIAL EVENTS: **Wednesday evening** - Crawfish boil, PIN SWAP with Mardi Gras theme and music by the Treme Brass Band. **Thursday** - bus tour of galleries, open house at Thomas Mann Designs. **Friday afternoon/evening** - Jewelry/Tool Auction and suppliers party followed by time to discover New Orleans, opening at Thomas Mann/Gallery I/O. **Saturday evening** - banquet with Louisiana style food and music by Sunpie and the Louisiana Sun Spots. All special events are included in the conference fee.

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PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS: April 2 - 4, 1995
Susan Kingsley - "Hydraulic Die Forming", with equipment and technical assistance provided by Lee Marshall of Bonnie Doone Engineering.

Thomas Mann - "Design for Survival - Entrepreneurial Thinking for the Metalsmith".

Both workshops will be conducted in the Metals Department at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. The fee for enrollment in one workshop is $150.00. For more information call Barbara Minor at 504-769-1542.

POST CONFERENCE DAY TRIP: April 10, 1995
Day trip to Stuller Setting to tour their facilities for manufacturing precious metal findings. Registrations fee of $45.00 covers bus transportation and a box breakfast.

AIR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS - Northwest Airlines, the preferred airline for the 1995 SNAG Conference, is pleased to offer discount airfares for SNAG Conference attendees. Further information is available in the Conference Registration Brochure. Conference attendees who are also attending the pre conference workshops at L.S.U. may fly into Baton Rouge before the workshops and out of New Orleans after the conference, still receiving air fare discounts from Northwest Airlines.

All subscribers of METALSMITH will receive a conference registration brochure. Others may request the brochure by contacting the SNAG Office at PHONE: 813-977-5326, FAX: 812-977-8462 or writing to SNAG Office, 5009 Londonderry Drive, Tampa, Florida, 33647.

Registration brochure will be available in November 1994.

This information is subject to change without notice.

Hotel - The Clarion Hotel on Canal Street in New Orleans will offer the following rates per nite: Single - $89.00, Double - $89.00. Triple - $108.00, Quad - Student rate will be per nite: Single - $65.00, Double - $78.00. City hotel tax will be an additional 11% plus a Convention Surcharge of $2.00 per nite. Reservations must be made by March 6, 1995 and secured with a deposit or a credit card. The Clarion Hotel is located at 1500 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. Phone 1-800-824-3359.

Meal Plan- An optional meal plan will include three breakfasts and three lunches at a cost of $68.00. The menu will be published with the registration brochure. The hotel has limited food service on the first floor and the neighborhood around the hotel offers very limited choices for a quick and good meal.

Conference Fees - $185.00 for members, $215.00 for non-members; students with current I.D. $125 for members, $140.00 for non-members. Fees must be postmarked by February 15, 1995. Those who subscribe to *METALSMITH MAGAZINE* only must pay non-member fees.

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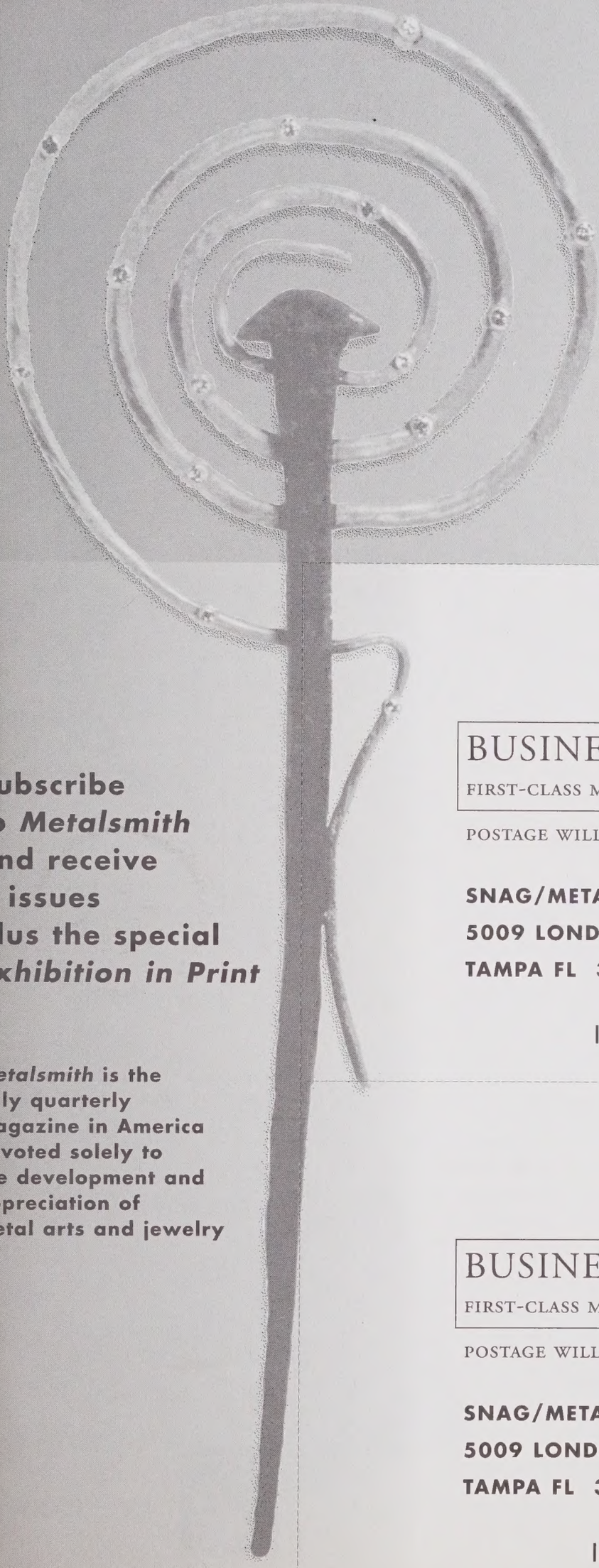

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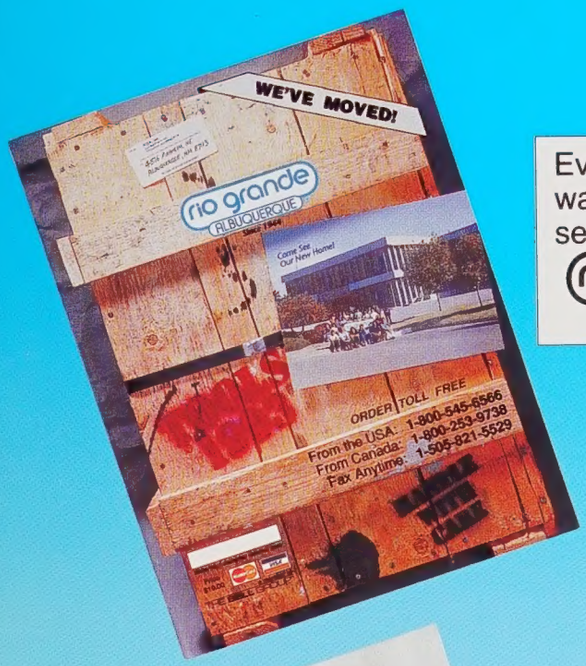

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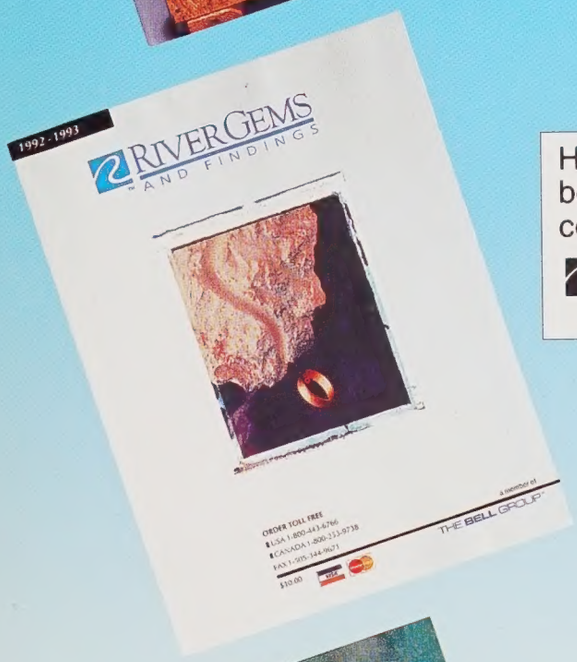

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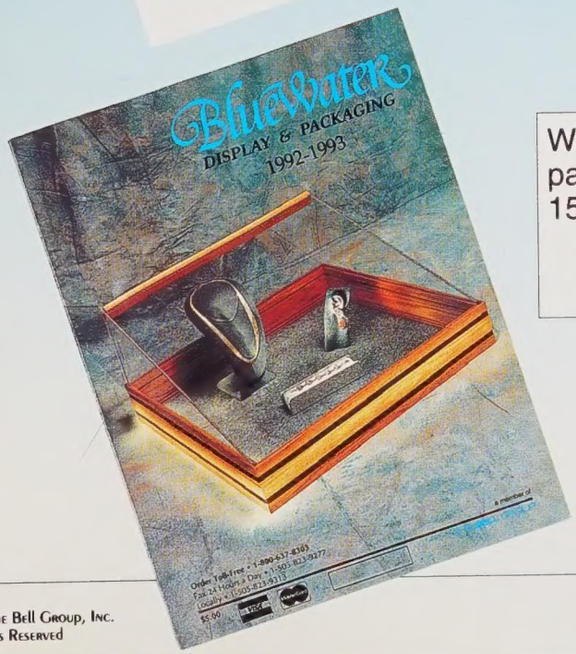

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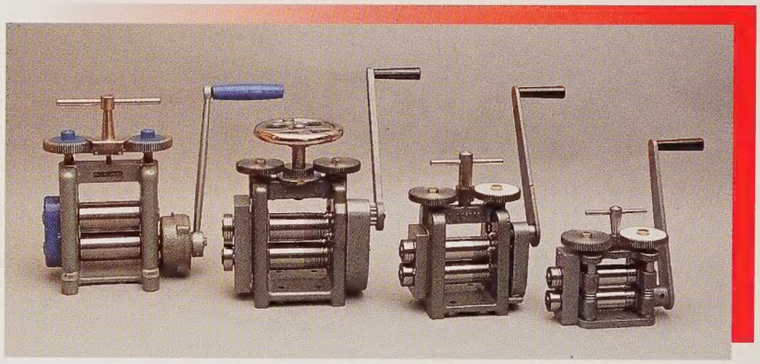

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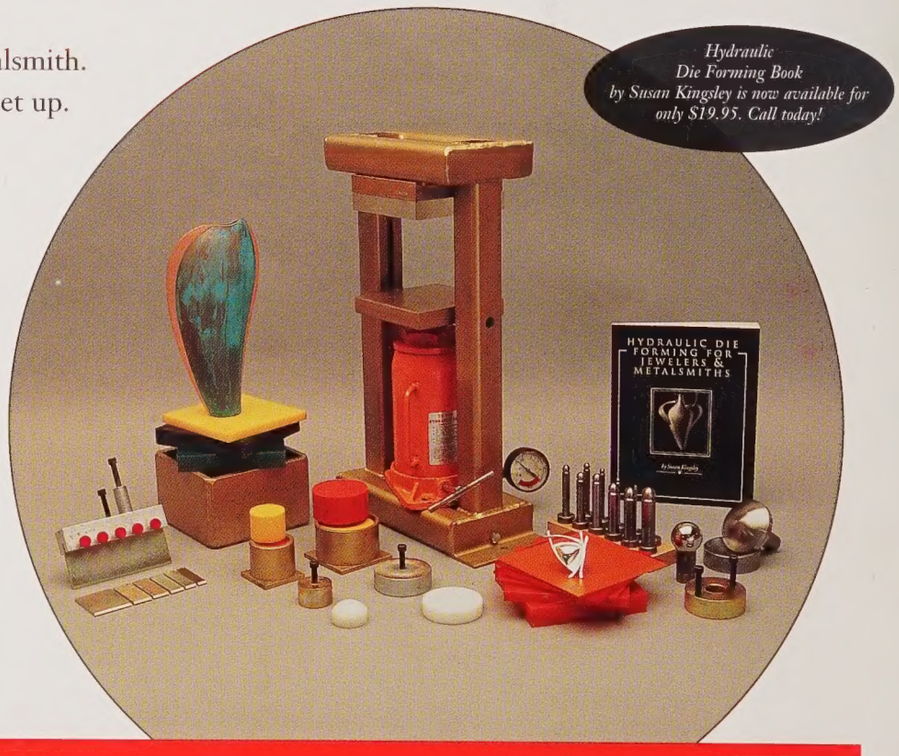
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